

**THE ROLE OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT IN STRATEGY EXECUTION
WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY**

by

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Abstract

This study analyses the role of project management during strategy execution within the telecommunications environment in South Africa. The study is qualitative in nature and utilises semi-structured face-to-face interviews with participants. Content analysis is utilised from a data analysis perspective. For the cross-case analysis an adapted version of the Interactive Qualitative Analysis technique was utilised to complete this.

This qualitative study found that there is a disconnect when utilising the project management discipline during strategy execution. This is due to a lack of corporate process ownership regarding the concepts under study. A further finding is that projects are selected based on financial viability even though a formal criteria is constituted for the selection of projects. Within this study, strategy execution results are achieved by applying dynamic processes when utilising the project management discipline. A project management based strategy execution framework will aid effective strategy execution in this regard.

This research is a cross sectional study at a particular point in time and not a longitudinal study over an extended period. The study does not have extensive cause and effect, behaviour and additional informational characteristics for informed theory building over an extended period as with a longitudinal study. The study has been conducted across four cases within a specific industry. An extensive sample across different industries would have allowed for better generalisability.

Keywords

Project management, strategy execution, projects/initiatives, corporate process ownership, organisational alignment, organisational architecture, organisational culture, telecommunications environment, governance, qualitative research.

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Chapter 1 : Introduction

The first chapter provides insight into the aspects that triggered the thinking for this research and illustrates the approach followed.

This chapter provides an overview of the study. The research question, research objectives, problem, and the importance and potential benefits of this study are explained and discussed. Reasons for the choice of study area in this thesis have been elucidated and the chapter concludes with the identified delimitations of the study.

The foundations of this study which were formulated despite the lack of an extensive theoretical framework and research design with regards to the subject is discussed.

The disconnect when utilising the project management discipline during strategy execution is presented and explained in chapter 8. These are presented with the aid of tables and a summary of the findings. The conclusions and recommendations and the potential impact for future research is explained in the final chapter.

1.1 Key Definitions

Change Management - Change management in this context refers to how changes resulting from strategy execution are disseminated and managed throughout the entire organisation (Hrebiniak, 2006:24; Salih and Doll, 2013:33).

Organisational Architecture - Louw and Venter (2010:478) comprehensively refer to “organisational architecture as an integrated strategic response that draws together key dimensions of the organisation, such as organisational structure, leadership, organisational culture, policies and strategies to guide formulation, alignment and implementation. Organisational architecture thus provides a blueprint of the internal and largely invisible workings of the organisation”.

Project Management - The Project Management Institute (n.d) defines project management as the application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to project activities to meet project requirements. Project Management is accomplished through the integration of the project management processes. Namely, initiating, planning, executing, monitoring, controlling and closing processes. This definition provided by the Project Management Institute is utilised as the definition of project management for the purposes of this study.

Strategy-as-Practice - According to Jarzabkowski and Spee (2009:69) strategy-as-practice is about the execution of strategy. "Who does it, what they do, how they do it, what they use and what implications this has for shaping strategy". Whittington (2006:618), Jarzabkowski and Spee (2009:70), Vaara and Whittington (2012:1) and Rouleau (2013:548) state that strategy-as-practice consists of three related components: (1) strategy practitioners the people responsible for performing strategic activity; (2) strategy practices consist of the procedures, conduct, and customs followed by practitioners and (3) praxis which is the actual customs utilised for strategy activity.

Strategy Execution - Thompson and Strickland (2003:19) define strategy execution as the control of continuous or new tasks to give life to the strategic plan. It involves gathering and managing the required resources across the organisation to give effect to the strategy. It is a constant endeavour to create and maintain an environment for sustained strategic execution competence. Franken, Edwards and Lambert (2009:49) enhances the definition of Thompson and Strickland, (2003:19) and believes that strategy execution is related to the development of a collection of transformation programs that will produce the strategy to be implemented. It also requires the assigning and organising of resources to effect these transformation programs. The above-mentioned combination of defining strategy execution serves as the definition of strategy execution for this study.

Throughout the literature review, the terms 'strategy execution' and 'strategy implementation' are used by various authors, but it is important to note that

these terms have identical meanings and as such, for the sake of consistency in this study the term 'strategy execution' has been utilised during this study and within this document.

1.2 Background

The global commercial world is evolving daily. Companies experience fresh challenges from within as well as from the external environment. It is imperative for companies to execute their strategies successfully to maintain and improve shareholder value (Franken, Edwards and Lambert, 2009:50).

Morgan, Levitt and Malek (2007:1) describe that research conducted has revealed that 90 percent of organisations were unsuccessful at implementing their strategies. They further state that the business world has an abundance of costly strategies that failed during execution. All the while, the resources could have been utilised more efficiently and effectively in other areas of the business where needed. Franken, *et al.* (2009:49) echo similar sentiments and state that different research indicate that strategy execution is a very difficult task based on evidence that 70% of strategies are not implemented successfully. Sull, Homkes and Sull (2015:60) concur and reveal that their studies have indicated that strategy execution is challenging, and organisations are battling to execute their strategies. In their survey conducted across Asia, Europe and the United States, more than 400 global Chief Executive Officers (CEO's) acknowledged that execution brilliance was a significant issue facing their organisations.

Thompson, Strickland and Gamble (2010:42) believe that strategy execution is by far the most challenging and cumbersome aspect of the entire strategic management process. MacLennan (2011:15) concurs by stating that executing strategy in complicated companies and institutions is a massive undertaking that the leadership team must embrace.

Mir and Pinnington (2013) express that project management is utilised in various industry's to implement complex projects when executing strategy. The role of project management during strategy execution has not been

sufficiently investigated. This is based on the limited literature discovered during this research hence the need for this study.

Franken, *et al.*, (2009:50) and MacLennan (2011:15) emphasise that organisations become complex and endure challenges through organic growth, legislation, economic climates, consumer behaviour and competitive business environments. Hence, one of the ways they can address these challenges is via successful strategy execution. Hrebiniak (2006:12) highlights change resistance, lack of a strategy execution framework, ambiguous strategy, lack of information, poorly defined roles and responsibilities as well as a lack of management support as aspects that inhibits strategy execution.

Antunes, Korda, Korda and Mistry (2010:12) are of the view that a lack of successful strategy execution is not due to a lack of work force or intellectual capital. It is rather due to the inability of leadership to rally and motivate the troops to create the required desire to execute projects successfully. Hrebiniak (2006:12) and Speculand (2014:29) differ by stating that a fundamental problem that exists is that managers are *au fait* with strategy formulation but lack strategy execution acumen. This skills shortage is one of the key reasons why a significant number of strategies do not achieve their desired outcomes. Hrebiniak (2006:12) and Speculand (2014:29) further assert that courses offer students an abundance of theory on strategy formulation and functional planning. However, there is very little if any focus on strategy execution.

Raffoni (2003:3) also alludes to this by expressing that strategy execution does not receive the academic recognition it deserves when compared to strategic planning. The reason being that strategic planning rewards innovative ideas. However, knowledgeable managers know that without the sound mental application strategic planning becomes fruitless if there is no successful strategic execution. Speculand (2014:29) accentuates that top global companies acknowledge that their incumbent leaders were educated with the art of strategy formulation but know very little about strategy execution.

The concept of strategy execution does not have well defined limits and many an author has still to embed a widely accepted and meaningful explanation within the literature (MacLennan, 2011:15). If we do not fully comprehend the meaning of something, it is very difficult to measure success. Martin (2010:66) agrees with the previous view and states that strategy execution is unsuccessful not only at the operational level but throughout the entire organisation. He believes that a distinction must be made between strategic planning and execution.

Morgan, *et al.*, (2007:2) and Kaplan and Norton (2008:4) concur by emphasising that top management often plans the strategy and leaves the execution element to the lower levels of workers. They fail to translate the meaning of the strategy into the actions required. This will most certainly lead to failure during strategy execution. Morgan, *et al.* (2007:2) believes that senior management's major issue is their inability to assess that alterations in strategy require changes to operational activities in the entire company. In conclusion Cocks (2010:263) emphasises this by mentioning that strategy execution goes off course because senior management renege on their accountability for the strategy being implemented and do not lead from the front.

Kaplan and Norton (2007:150) pioneered the balanced scorecard idea. It complemented the established financial indicators with norms that measured performance from other angles viz. customer, internal business process as well as learning and growth. Their reasoning is that most companies operational and management control systems are based on traditional instruments. Hence, there is an emphasis on short-term financial measures which leaves a gap between strategic design and execution. With the introduction of the balanced scorecard, organisations are able to align their processes and steer institutional implementation of long-term strategies.

Kaplan and Norton (2008:8) enriched their earlier balanced scorecard work by introducing a six step closed loop management system for effective strategy

execution. This system assimilates the various management tools and results in their defined strategy execution framework. Morgan, *et al.*, (2007) introduced a similar framework approach. They recommend six imperatives that will assist in executing a strategy. This, as indicated by Kaplan and Norton (2008:8) is also a framework approach to strategy execution. Contrary to the above-mentioned process approach, Jarzabkowski and Spee (2009:69) believe that strategy-as-practice is a subject that involves “the doing of strategy, who does it, what they do, how they do it, what they use and what implications this has for shaping strategy”.

The section that follows introduces the industry of study and the rationale for selecting this area.

1.3 Industry of study

South Africa (2013:10) states in their 2012/2013 annual report that its mission is to “build a better life for all through an enabling and sustainable world class information and communication technologies environment”. The department further states that their constitutional mandate is to establish a vital communications sector. This will ensure that the majority of South African’s access vigorous, dependable and reasonably priced services. This will enable the development and progression of socio-economic goals (South Africa, 2013:10). In order to complement the above South Africa (2017:19) reiterates in their 2016/2017 annual report that their mission is to “create an enabling environment for the provision of inclusive communication services to all South Africans in a manner that promotes socioeconomic development and investment through broadcasting, new media, print media and other new technologies, and brand the country locally, regionally and internationally”.

Based on the important contribution to socio-economic development as emphasised by the South African Department of Communication the telecommunications environment in South Africa (SA) has been selected as the sample industry for the purposes of this study.

Research indicates that rivalry within the SA telecommunications environment is snowballing. It is because of market permeation and a decrease in the mobile termination rate (MTR). This is negatively affecting the mobile Average Revenue Per User (ARPU) (Business Monitor International, 2013:7).

In 2010, the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa hereafter referred to as ICASA determined that ineffective competition existed in the provision of call termination because of, amongst others, inefficient pricing. The authority imposed cost-oriented pricing on key players for mobile and fixed termination. South Africa (2017:7) confirms the above by stating that “the cost of communication in SA and in the region is relatively high. On the domestic front, we have requested the regulator, ICASA, to determine if there is effective competition in the broadband market. We have further requested the Minister of Economic Development to ask the Competition Commission to look at the competition in the sector and explore additional ways to bring down the cost of communication”.

Modern organisations face significant shifts in the environment. Technological developments force companies to adopt new technologies as well as build new interfaces with both customers and suppliers. This leads to a competition for customers and resources as well as forces companies to change their business strategies (ICASA, 2014). However, the success rate for strategic change programs may be as low as 30% (Kuyvenhoven and Buss, 2011:2).

Strategy execution is about focusing resources on the objectives that will reap the biggest reward for your organisation. It is more than just having a strategy; it is translating your strategy into action daily. It starts with having a clear sense of the business and priorities, and then aligning the organisation to meet measurable goals and engaging people through continuous performance feedback (Coon and Wolf, 2005:19).

For organisations within the telecommunications industry to remain relative and competitive, while still fulfilling their important role from a socio-economic perspective, it is essential that the key component of strategy execution be

achieved. Due to the fact that the project management discipline is utilised during strategy execution but the role of this discipline has not been adequately investigated as a vehicle for strategy execution. Hence, studying companies within this industry will be of great benefit because of the pressures that they face and the contingencies they will have to develop, to achieve their business objectives as well as the objectives of SA as a country.

1.4 Problem Statement

Due to the economic climate and shareholder perspectives, companies are under tremendous pressure to execute their strategic plans successfully. Based on this fact, the following question is often posed, are companies agile enough to adapt their strategic approach to demands of the corporate world? Furthermore, are they able to execute significant changes using an appropriate approach to strategy execution?

The role of project management as a discipline for executing strategy within the corporate environment in SA has not been sufficiently investigated. Hence, the purpose of the research is to provide answers to this dilemma.

This research aims to address the following question:

How is the project management discipline utilised in executing strategies within the South African telecommunications environment?

1.5 Research Objectives

The main objective is to investigate the role of project management in the execution of strategy in the telecommunications environment in SA.

The secondary objectives linked to the primary objective are to:

- Identify to what degree the process of the selection of strategic initiatives or projects influences strategy execution.

- Explore project management processes and practices in support of strategy execution.
- Identify the alternative ways of executing strategy within a corporate environment in SA.
- Develop a conceptual framework of the role of project management during strategy execution.

1.6 Importance of the Study and Potential Benefits

This research benefits the academic fraternity as well as the business environment in SA and contributes to strategy execution frameworks research domain. It is envisaged that the research will add an additional dimension to existing frameworks for strategy execution. It enhances the understanding of what strategy practices exist. It will expand the body of knowledge about strategy execution and highlight what considerations corporates should give when executing a strategy. Furthermore, it provides an understanding as to the role of project management being utilised as an enabler for strategy execution. Insight will be afforded by what is prescribed from a theoretical viewpoint and what actually transpires from a practical perspective when executing strategies by utilising the project management discipline. It stimulates thinking around this subject and encourages further research in this area.

This research highlights the need for companies to seek continuous improvement in terms of strategy execution. The research emphasises that while formulating strategy, corporates should give serious consideration to the execution component. It also examines how corporates executes strategy, the approach used and if this is significant in strategic execution. A further benefit is assessing the organisational architecture to ensure that they remain relevant through successful strategy execution. It does so by providing a knowledge base whereby these companies can assess if their approach to strategy execution is adequate by utilising project management.

1.7 Research Philosophy

The research philosophy is interpretivism. Interpretivism requires an inductive research approach. Therefore, a qualitative research method was applied. Yin (2014:4) and Cooper and Schindler (2014:144) express that the qualitative research method is most commonly used for exploratory research studies. This method is ideal where researchers lack a clear understanding of the issues encountered during the study. A qualitative study allows the researcher to gain a better understanding of the concepts at hand and contribute to an improved research design through an inductive reasoning approach. Bluhm, Harman, Lee and Mitchel (2011:1870) concur by mentioning that qualitative research is important for understanding systems within organisations and how these systems evolve over time.

The researcher utilised the case study research method for this study. Yin (2014:16) segregates the definition of case study research into two specific components. Firstly, Yin (2014:16) defines case study research as a practical review that probes a current event within a day-to-day environment when the limitations between the event and environment are not well defined. In the second component Yin (2014:16) states that the case study review manages the unique scenario where there will be multiple variables of concern and information facts to be considered with a desired outcome. The research philosophy is discussed in more detail (see § chapter 3).

1.8 Research Methodology

The research methodology applied is briefly introduced in this section. The detailed research methodology is discussed in (see § chapter 3).

1.8.1 Participants

Four cases within the South African telecommunications environment were studied for this research they are referred to as Cases A, B, C and D in this study (see § chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7). The organisations availed the relevant participants based on the concepts under study as provided by the researcher. The participants interviewed were regarded as senior management by their organisation. Participants were deemed by the

organisation to have the required knowledge to contribute to this study (see § chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7). Northcutt and McCoy (2004:46) state that constituents are a group of people who have a common understanding of the phenomenon and are chosen as a result of their power over and distance from the phenomenon being studied. “Interactive Qualitative Analysis presumes that knowledge and power are largely dependent” (Northcutt & McCoy 2004:16). The constituents were selected because they possess knowledge of the phenomenon being studied.

1.8.2 Interviews

For the individual face-to-face interviews participants were interviewed at their place of work to ensure the participants were comfortable when being interviewed. Participants interviewed in this study are employed by their South African operation. The focus group cross-case analysis session was held at University of South Africa’s Graduate School of Business Leadership. The face-to-face interviews were electronically recorded and then transcribed for data analysis purposes (see § section 3.5).

1.8.3 Documents

Documents analysed by the researcher were publicly available. Participants referred the researcher to these documents that were available on the organisations websites. For confidentiality purposes these websites have not been referenced.

1.8.4 Data Analysis

The data analysed was qualitative in nature. Within and cross-case analysis was utilised in this research. The conventional content analysis approach was utilised (see § section 3.7). Initial and then secondary coding was applied to develop the codes for the within case analysis. Thereafter the codes were utilised to develop the themes for the within case analysis by the researcher. For the cross-case analysis the researcher availed the codes developed by the researcher to the focus group participants. Thereafter the participants developed the themes for the cross-cases analysis utilising an adapted Interactive Qualitative Analysis methodology (see § section 3.7.2).

1.8.5 Trustworthiness

In order to ensure trustworthiness, the researcher addressed the four areas as recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Namely credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability in pursuit of a trustworthy qualitative research (see § section 3.8).

1.9 Delimitation of the Study

Project management methodologies such as the project management body of knowledge (PMBOK) or Prince 2 are not addressed as part of this research. This study focuses on the strategy execution element and the role of the project management discipline only within strategy execution. Hence, there is not an end-to-end view in terms of the strategic management lifecycle, from strategic planning to execution and monitoring.

The researcher compiled a list of project management articles for the year period 2004 to 2018. The objective was to determine the utilisation of the project management discipline within the end-to-end strategy lifecycle. Therefore, the researcher searched for articles from strategic planning to strategy execution and monitoring that utilised project management. As illustrated below in Figure 1-1 a categorisation depicting the utilisation of the project management discipline is displayed across the search areas as stated above. A total of 99 articles relating to this discipline were reviewed.

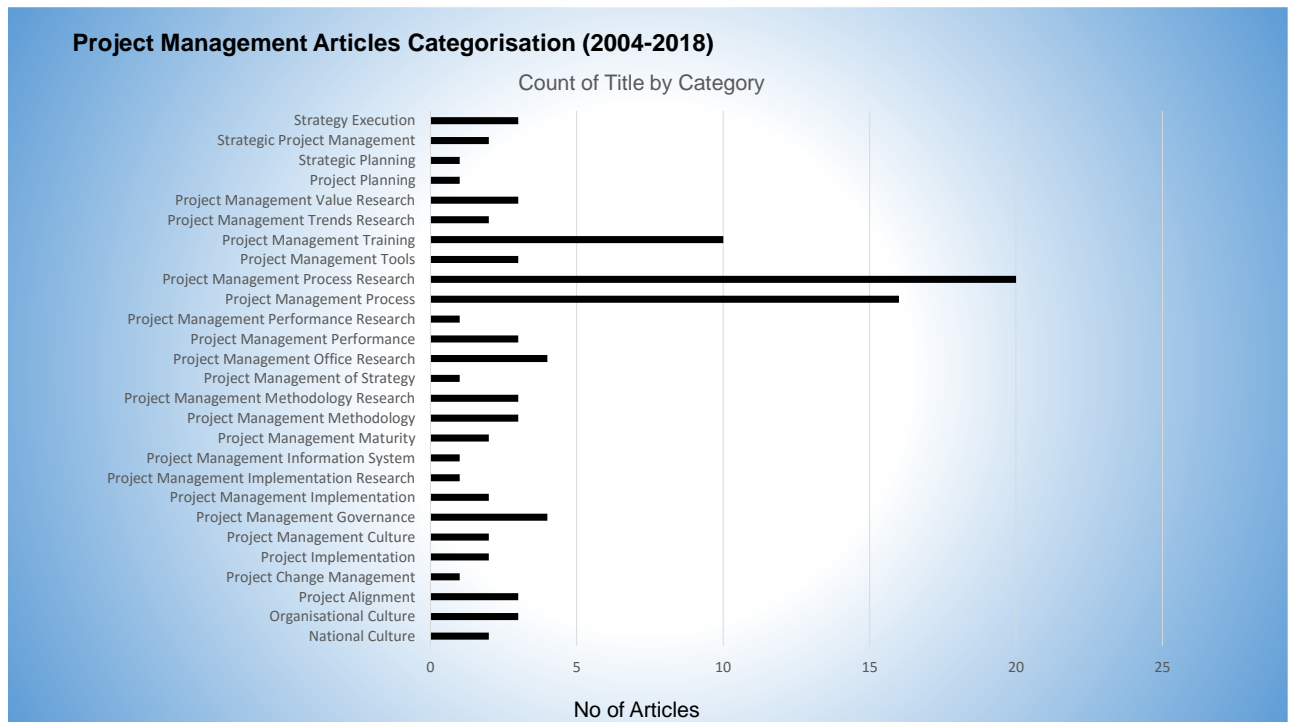


Figure 1-1: Project Management Articles Categorisation

The data revealed that the utilisation of project management is not very prevalent within the initial stages of the strategy lifecycle. There is limited literature regarding the utilisation of project management as an enabler for strategy execution. Hence, for the purposes of this study the researcher will build on the research to date regarding project management as an enabler for strategy execution.

The study is limited to telecommunications companies within South Africa only. Meaning it will provide a limited view when compared to the global telecommunications industry and market.

1.9.1 Project Portfolio Management

Rad and Levin (2008:1) as well Killen and Hunt (2013:132) states that project portfolio management is a reasonable collection of projects and a systematic implementation thereof in order to achieve a positive desirable outcome. The success of the portfolio is determined by the effective prioritisation and successful implementation of projects within the portfolio. This research paper

does not focus on the portfolio component but on the role of project management during strategy execution.

1.9.2 Strategic Project Management

Kotnour and Camci (2002:2) are of the opinion that strategic project management is an alignment of the company's structural practices to deliver the strategy. These will be practices such as the organisation of projects, information, technical, strategy as well as departmental and interdepartmental functioning. Asrilhant, Dyson and Meadows (2007:90) concur by mentioning that strategic project management consists of a couple of vital stages, this being evaluation and control. Evaluation entails defining, organising, prioritising and approving the project. Control involves the assessment and revamp of the project through to its successful execution.

Hence strategic project management consists of a number of features co-ordinated by senior management to achieve a certain defined outcome. This study focuses on the project management, which is a key component for strategic project management.

1.9.3 Project Management Maturity

In order to ensure effective project management application within organisations they have to ensure a sound basis for this discipline. Kerzner (2006:890) defines this as a project management maturity model that will assist organisations to execute projects in an effective manner. This study focusses on role of project management during strategy execution. It does not address the level of project management maturity during strategy execution. This is recommended for future research in the conclusions chapter.

1.10 Limitations of the study

Developing theory from case studies is an inductive or bottom up approach and the unique informational characteristics inform the level of theory generalisability (Eisenhardt, 1989:547). Thus, developing theory from case study research could lead to an inhibited and distinctive theory formulation. Furthermore, the research is a cross sectional study at a point in time and not

a longitudinal study over an extended period. Hence, the researcher does not have an opportunity to examine cause and effect, behaviour and additional informational characteristics for informed theory building over an extended period as with a longitudinal study. Therefore, the risk for this research is that the findings may not be generalisable to the entire population.

Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014:52) cites that qualitative research is time consuming. Furthermore, the researcher was the sole person conducting the research. The researcher addresses the highlighted limitation of being the sole researcher by ensuring that rigour is applied and maintained to the qualitative methodology.

1.11 Ethical Considerations

Prior to commencing the data collection, the researcher applied for and received an ethic clearance certificate from the University of South Africa. The ethics clearance reference number is 2016_SBL/DBL_027_FA.

Permission was obtained from the case organisations to conduct the study. In addition to this written informed consent was obtained from all the participants for the individual interviews as well as the focus group session. The ethical process followed is elaborated on in (§ section 3.9). The chapter that follows provides an overview of the remaining chapters in this document.

1.12 Overview of Chapters

Chapter 2 details the theory of strategy execution as well as the role of project management as an enabler for strategy execution as a discipline. This chapter discusses the key components for the concepts under study.

Chapter 3 explains the research strategy undertaken and details the reasons why this strategy was chosen.

Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 details the within case analysis across the four cases, namely Cases A, B, C and D.

Chapter 8 presents the cross-case analysis pertaining to the four cases and leads to the research findings for this study.

Chapter 9 offers the conclusions of this research and the recommendations for further studies regarding the concepts under study.

A list of references and appendices brings the document to a closure.

Chapter 2 : Literature Review

This chapter discusses the literature review pertaining to this study.

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter describes the research objectives, problem and the importance and potential benefits of the study. This chapter sets the scene of the study from a theoretical perspective. Due to a lack of academic literature regarding the role of project management during strategy execution, the project, management and strategy execution bodies of knowledge are discussed in more detail to create context for the study.

In analysing the literature, the researcher firstly highlights the meaning of the strategy execution and project management concepts for this study as defined by the various authors. Thereafter the researcher reviews the key factors related to successful strategy execution. Strategy execution frameworks are addressed in detail. The relevance of strategy execution and organisational architecture as well as strategy execution in relation to change management are also discussed.

The focal point of this strategy execution component of the literature review is the analysis of the frameworks for strategy execution. The researcher then reviews strategy-as-practice and its key components. Hereafter the discipline of project management is discussed. The literature review then addresses the analysis of project management as an enabler for strategy execution. It concludes with a summary of the literature review regarding the body of knowledge under study, namely, strategy execution and project management. Below find a diagram depicting the literature review structure.

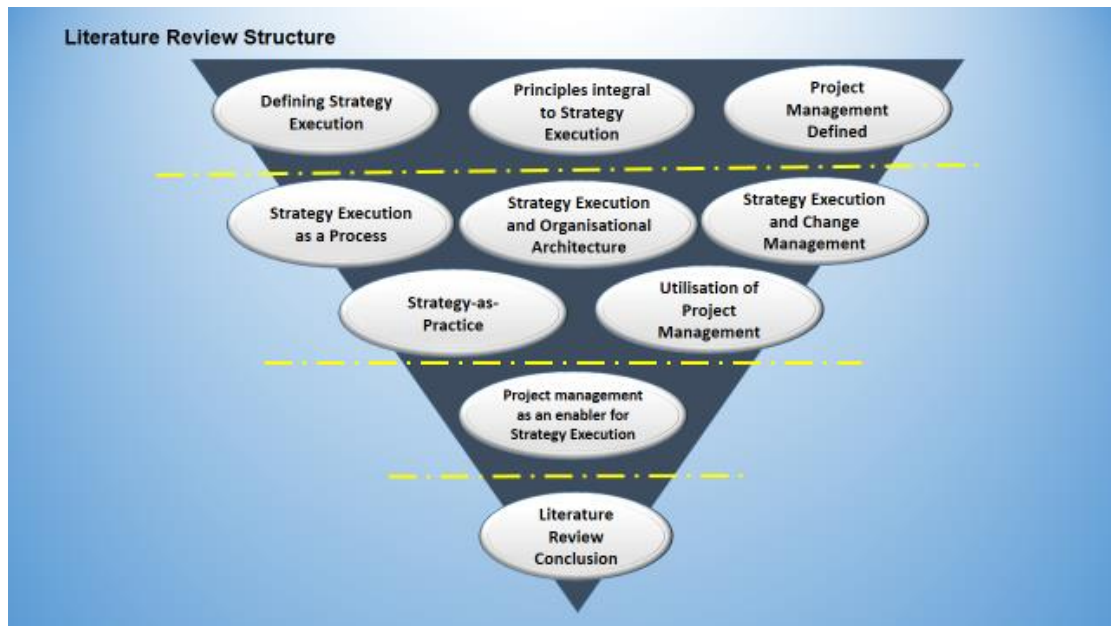


Figure 2-1: Literature Review Structure

2.2 Strategy Execution

This section discusses the strategy execution frameworks literature for this study.

2.2.1 Defining Strategy Execution

Thompson and Strickland (2003:19) and Thompson, Strickland and Gamble (2007:361) define strategy execution as the control of continuous or new tasks to give life to the strategic plan. It involves gathering and managing the required resources across the organisation to give effect to the strategy. It is a constant endeavour to create and maintain an environment for sustained strategic execution competence. Franken, *et al.*, (2009:49) enhances the definition of Thompson and Strickland (2003:19) and Thompson, *et al.*, (2007:361) and express that strategy execution is related to the development of a collection of transformation programs that will produce the strategy to be implemented. It also requires the assigning and organising of resources to effect these transformation programs.

2.2.2 Principles integral to Strategy Execution

Cocks (2010:260) believes that strategy execution requires exclusive and imaginative competences including management, an eye for the intricacies of the deliverables as well as an effective way of disseminating information to the entire company. Strategy execution has become a crucial element considered by market analysts when assessing a potential takeover even before the scrutinising of the actual strategy. With this scrutiny of such a crucial factor, some organisations still fall short. So what are some of the concerns with strategy execution?

Hrebiniak (2006) believe that the strategy execution challenges identified can be addressed by providing a framework for strategy execution even though most managers will benefit from the practical implementations. This framework can serve as a logical guideline and support to strategy execution. He states that there are a number of formidable issues to successful strategy execution. The experimental data collected as part of his research have highlighted the following challenges. There is often change resistance, where staff are not comfortable with the change and have not embraced it. There is also sometimes an ambiguous strategy that confuses the people executing the strategy. The lack of a strategy execution framework to guide the strategy execution is evident at times and the lack of information about the intended strategy to be executed. Poorly defined roles and responsibilities and a lack of management support during the strategy execution process is also problematic. If these challenges were overcome it would contribute to successful strategy execution.

Strategy execution requires a high performance culture and changing a culture is no easy task. Teambuilding events are great however; it contributes very little to effective strategy execution. Understanding what is pivotal to a culture change is a key contributor to successful strategy execution (Hrebiniak, 2013:1). Sull, Homkes and Sull (2015:64) are in agreement and are of the opinion that a culture that supports execution must have additional incentives such as flexible practices, coordination and determination. Thompson, *et al.*, (2010) complements this by emphasising that translating

strategic ideas into positive outcomes examines a leader's skills and ability in maintaining a culture for successful strategy execution.

The plan for executing the desired strategy materialises from determining what the organisation will have to change or enhance to accomplish the expected financial and strategic targets.

Thompson, *et al.* (2010) recommend principles integral to strategy execution namely competencies, adequate resourcing, supportive governance, application of good standards, inspiring staff to perform optimally, instituting an effective rewards system, creating an environment for successful strategy execution as well as displaying positive leadership that will aid effective strategy execution. (Thompson, *et al.*, 2010) continues by asserting that effective strategy execution necessitates an industrious approach to achieving operational excellence from the organisations leadership group. Successful strategy execution depends on the continuous collaboration among managers at the respective operational levels.

Watson (2005:4), Ezop (2010:45) and Schrock (2012) supports this and believes that strategy execution is about creating a strategy execution culture and fostering an atmosphere where everyone works towards a common goal. Schrock (2012) asserts that the common pillars of success are well known. It is not a lack of information or an unwillingness to be successful that limits organisations but rather, a case of execution competence that remains a concern. Ezop (2010:45) supports the above-mentioned and states that the human element and organisational culture should be incorporated into strategy execution planning at the earliest possible convenience as this is always done as a last resort.

Lastly, MacLennan (2011:52) is of the view that the pursuit of an ideal formula for successful strategy execution is futile. Discovering the intricacies of strategy execution affords business an opportunity to distinguish key norms for effective execution. He recommends the 5 C's of strategy execution. Namely causality, criticality, compatibility, continuity and clarity. These are discussed in the section that follows.

An excellent strategy, great products/services or innovative technology can propel an organisation to greater heights. Only continuous sound execution can ensure sustainability. Through their own declaration, most corporates are not very competent at this. For management to institute remedial action, they have to recognise the areas of concern (Neilson, Martin and Powers, 2008:61).

2.2.3 Strategy Execution Frameworks

According to Thompson, *et al.* (2010) strategy execution mainly involves the management of people and processes. Strategy execution frameworks for this research comprises of the various components that constitutes a particular framework as illustrated in Table 2-1. The authors of the respective frameworks as alluded to in Table 2-1 recommend that all the components within these frameworks be executed efficiently to ensure successful strategy execution. Morgan, *et al.* (2007:11) concurs and are of the view that strategy execution desires an extensive coordinated effort to ensure effective strategy execution.

2.2.3.1 Approach to analysing the strategy execution frameworks

In analysing strategy execution frameworks literature, the researcher identified the key strategy execution frameworks as illustrated in Table 2-1. Namely, the Morgan, *et al.* (2007) six imperatives, the Kaplan and Norton (2008:8) six step process and the MacLennan (2011:58) inverted pyramid framework that underpins his 5 C's of strategy execution, the Thompson, *et al.* (2007) strategy execution framework as well as the Franken, *et al.* (2009) ten elements approach. The common elements within these respective frameworks are identified and categorised. Thereafter these common elements are discussed collectively in detail within these respective categories. The uncommon elements are also discussed and explained individually. Section §2.2.3.2 to §2.2.3.9 that follows encapsulates the detailed strategy execution frameworks categorisation and analysis.

Kaplan and Norton (2007:150) pioneered the balanced scorecard idea that emerged because of tough competition and the commercial environment at the time. It complemented the established financial indicators with norms that measured performance from other angles viz. customer, internal business process as well as learning and growth. Their reasoning was that most companies operational and management control systems are based on traditional instruments. Therefore, there is an emphasis on short-term financial measures which leaves a gap between strategic design and execution. With the introduction of the balanced scorecard, organisations can align their processes and steer the institution in implementing a long-term strategy.

In order to build on their earlier balanced scorecard work Kaplan and Norton (2008:8) introduced a six step closed loop management system for effective strategy execution. This system assimilates the various management tools and results in their defined strategy execution process. Morgan, *et al.* (2007) has a similar approach. They recommend six imperatives that will assist in executing your strategy. MacLennan (2011:57) introduces his inverted pyramid framework that underpins his 5 C's of strategy execution. Phase 1 of the framework transforms the objectives into the activities required for strategy execution. Phase 2 aligns the organisational models and methods critical for successful strategy execution. Franken, *et al.* (2009:51) believes that there are numerous models for successful strategy execution. When these are reviewed, they are of the mind that ten common elements for successful strategy execution emerge. This, like the model suggested by Kaplan and Norton (2008) is also framework driven. These frameworks are listed below in Table 2-1 and are discussed collectively in detail.

Table 2-1: Strategy Execution Frameworks

Kaplan and Norton, 2008	MacLennan, 2011	Morgan, M., Levitt, RE. & Malek, W, 2007	Thompson, et al., 2007	Franken, Edwards, Lambert, 2009
Six step closed loop system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the strategy • Translate the strategy • Aligning the organisation • Plan Operations • Monitor and Learn • Test and Adapt 	5 C's <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causality • Criticality • Compatibility • Continuity • Clarity • Inverted pyramid framework (Phase 1 & 2) 	Six Imperatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideation • Nature • Vision • Engagement • Synthesis • Transition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a company • Marshal resources • Institute policies and procedures • Adopt best practices • Install information and operating systems • Align rewards and incentives • Instilling a corporate culture • Exercising strong leadership 	Ten Elements <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engendering & Reinforcing an Organizational Culture of Continuous Change 2. Understanding the Drivers and Content of Each Change Program at an Early Stage of the Lifecycle 3. Aligning & Filtering Programs in Relation to the Strategic Goals, thus Creating the Change Portfolio 4. Harmonizing the Strategic Leadership Team to Support the Change Portfolio 5. Developing the Detailed Business Case and get Approval/Refusal for Each Change Program 6. Establishing Accountability & Governance of Each Change Program 7. Executing Each Change Program and Realizing Intended Benefits 8. Managing the Ongoing Change Portfolio, Conflict Resolution, Resources, and Interdependencies 9. Coordinating the Elements of the Change Capability 10. Reviewing, Learning and Improving the Change Capability

Source: Kaplan and Norton, 2008; MacLennan, 2011; Morgan, et al., 2007; Thompson, et al., 2007 and Franken, et al., 2009.

2.2.3.2 Cultivating a Strategy

Firstly, Kaplan and Norton (2008:9) formulate their strategy with the input of the vision, mission, values and strategic intent. The strategy is then planned by translating the plan into explicit business objectives, measures, targets, initiatives and financial measures with the output being a strategy map. This strategy map explains the organisations processes that will enable it to achieve its business and commercial objectives. This is based on the 'balanced scorecards' perspectives in conjunction with cause and effect associations among objectives. Thereby enabling the company for successful strategy execution. MacLennan (2011:53) refers to this as the causality that

allows companies to be in touch and comprehend what is happening around them particularly in relation to the cause and effect relationships of strategy execution. It enables the leadership to identify what is crucial in their environments for successful strategy execution.

Morgan, *et al.* (2007:62) agrees and refers to this as the vision phase of strategy execution in their framework. They are of the opinion that this phase allows the company to review, enhance and improve strategy for execution thus renders disseminating the strategy execution information easier to the rest of the company. Furthermore, they recommend that “SMART” principles namely, specific, measurable, achievable, resourced and time bound be utilised to define business objectives, measures, targets, initiatives and financial measures as this will provide a clear plan as to what the expected business outcomes are during strategy execution.

Morgan, *et al.* (2007:28) concur with this first step but propose a prior intervention before commencing the strategy execution planning. They present the ideation phase of strategy execution. During this phase, the company explains and shares its character, rationale as well plans. They believe that this phase is the commencement and foundation of the strategy to be executed and influences the strategic direction of the entire company. In illustrating the importance of ideation, they state that this phase should be the starting point for allocating funding for strategy execution.

Antunes, *et al.*, (2010:9) are of the same opinion and mention that an energy of engagement is required. This focuses on how we effectively engage to ensure people understand clearly, what is expected of them during strategy execution. This includes the manner in which the leadership team conducts themselves when engaging the resources. Franken, *et al.*, (2009:54) as well as Cocks (2010:263) complement this by stating that dedicated leadership is required to create an environment that will sustain successful strategy execution. They believe that senior management must be continuously involved and illustrate their commitment to the strategy execution process.

2.2.3.3 Organising the Strategy

During this second step, Kaplan and Norton (2008:10) believe the importance of creating a framework for the choosing, financing and the assigning of responsibility to the portfolio of strategic initiatives. They argue that these three activities integrate short-term deliverables with inter-departmental and strategic priorities thereby creating the required focus, attention and responsibility for the execution of these strategic initiatives. Morgan, *et al.*, (2007:141), Thompson, *et al.*, (2007:375), Franken, *et al.*, (2009:54) and MacLennan (2011:53) agree by stating that a successful strategy and its execution consist of selecting and supporting to do the appropriate initiatives and executing it effectively. Franken, *et al.*, (2009:55) also suggests that the return on investments and the accountability for this need to be noticeably defined. Thompson, *et al.* (2007:361) and Franken, *et al.*, (2009:55) are of the view that a sound business case is instrumental in choosing and financing of initiatives as well as assigning of resources for effective strategy execution.

Morgan, *et al.*, (2007:141) refers to this as the engagement area of their strategy execution framework. They are of the opinion that one can only please some of the people some of the time. Therefore, they state that this engagement area necessitates the key stakeholders to converse constructively in terms of recognising and comprehending their issues and thereby assigning resources to the appropriate strategic initiatives in terms of importance. Morgan, *et al.*, (2007:141) and Franken, *et al.*, (2009:54) are of the view that a company's meticulous ability to execute its strategy with the carefully selected initiatives or portfolio of projects allows them to distinguish themselves from their competitors in terms of strategy execution. Morgan, *et al.*, (2007:141) are of the view that an organisation can only support its adopted strategy by participating in suitable project portfolio management.

In order to ensure that this step is a success Morgan, *et al.*, (2007:144) recommend five key tasks that must be performed consistently. The tasks are initiated by determining the management control of the engagement area. How well an organisation executes its strategy is dependent on how effective

it manages the portfolio of projects. Here an organisation assigns the sponsorship of projects. During this initial step, it is also determined which projects to pursue, how resources will be allocated and who will manage each portfolio (Morgan, *et al.*, 2007:144). Project sponsorship incorporates crucial discipline and support to the portfolio management system. A rigorous sponsorship framework establishes project support and informs the dialogue process for sound portfolio management decisions (Morgan, *et al.*, 2007:144).

The initiatives are then ranked in order of importance. The selection process for project prioritisation should be focused on each project's impact on the value adding events of the organisation (Morgan, *et al.*, 2007:157; Sull, Turconi, Sull & Yoder, 2017). Hereafter the availability of resources are determined through careful analysis of the current resources and their workloads according to Morgan, *et al.*, (2007:164) and Franken, *et al.* (2009:54). Capacity and skill set can alter the availability of resources allocated to projects. Hence the need for thorough and careful analysis (Morgan, *et al.*, 2007:165).

Once the resource availability has been determined, the project portfolio must be optimised by pairing the projects with resource availability. This process requires key sources of data namely, resource requirements and the timing of the prioritised projects as well as resource capacity and availability during the intended duration (Morgan, *et al.*, 2007:167 and Sull, *et al.*, 2017:99). Morgan, *et al.*, (2007:164) is of the view that for optimal project portfolio management there has to be an accessible portfolio management system. There also has to be an understanding of the interdependence in the portfolio, a model for different scenarios and an avenue to conduct stability reviews of the process.

Lastly once the resources are assigned the process concludes with monitoring, continuous evaluation and readjustment to ensure the strategy is executed according to plan (Morgan, *et al.*, 2007 and Sull, *et al.*, 2017:103).

2.2.3.4 Institutional Synchronisation

Kaplan and Norton (2008:11), MacLennan (2011:54) and Sull, *et al.*, (2017:104) are of the view that unless the various departments within the business as well as employees understand the strategy and the role they play in achieving the strategy, it will be extremely challenging for businesses to execute their strategy successfully. That is why the third step of their framework entails aligning the various organisational units and the employees with the strategy. They further express that the balanced scorecard perspective provides a sound categorisation for illustrating the various alignment indicators across business units (Kaplan and Norton, 2008:12).

From an employee perspective, Kaplan and Norton (2008:12) argue that for effective strategy execution to occur, employees should have a stake and be interested in assisting the company in achieving its strategic objectives. In order to accomplish this, the company should communicate and train staff about the strategy, link the employee key performance indicators and reward systems to the strategy as well as aligning the employee training and development plans to the strategy.

Neilson, Martin and Powers (2008:62) add to this by stating that when an organisation fails to execute its strategy the first thing that comes to mind is to restructure the organisation instead of looking at the root cause of the strategy execution ineffectiveness. Their research indicates that the basics of successful strategy execution begins with sound decision-making and appropriate dissemination of information. Sull, Homkes and Sull (2015:63) complements this and is of the view that how well management grasps the strategy communicated is much more valuable than the frequency of communication of the strategy. Parnell, Carraher and Holt, (2002:161) refer to the above as strategic diffusion which means the level to which the strategy is implemented and is adopted by the company. It contains the following dimensions.

Firstly, involvement, which according to Kaplan and Norton (2008:12) refer to the extent that middle and lower level managers are involved in the strategic formulation. Parnell (2008:1279) pronounces that strategy formulation includes objective and goal setting. Hence, the more middle managers are involved in strategic planning the better the chances of successful strategy execution.

The second dimension of strategy implementation is understanding. Kaplan and Norton (2008:12) and Franken, *et al.*, (2009:50) believe that middle to lower level managers will be more receptive to the execution of a strategy if they have thorough knowledge of it and how it aligns with the bigger picture. Franken, *et al.*, (2009:55) and Cocks (2010:263) agree and express that if a company is unsuccessful with this aspect, strategy execution will not be successful. Commitment is the last dimension that determines how management owns and accepts responsibility for the implementation of the strategy. Parnell *et al.*, (2002:161) state that strategic diffusion ultimately is the degree to which management is part of the strategy formulation, their knowledge of the strategy and their dedication to its execution. Antunes, *et al.*, (2010:115) adds to this by mentioning that the energy of management underlines the importance of ensuring that middle management is also capable of executing the strategy from conceptualisation until the end.

2.2.3.5 Operational Planning

Step four in the Kaplan and Norton (2008:13) “closed loop management system” addresses the importance of planning the operations. Here they address two aspects namely, (1) aligning the process improvement programmes with strategic objectives and (2) the development of an operating plan by linking the strategic plan to forecasts for capital and operating expenditure in pursuit of effective strategy execution.

Process enhancements and developments are an integral part of a strategy execution plan. Companies must align its strategy to the governance and operational processes in order to have the ability to maintain successful

strategy execution (Kaplan and Norton, 2008:13). They are of the view that organisations should review their entire portfolio of strategic processes. This allows organisations to assign key performance indicators to employees for improvement, tracking and measurement. In complementing the above they recommend formal knowledge sharing in order to publicise success stories of process excellence across the organisation. Thompson, *et al.*, (2007:361) concur and emphasise that sound policies and procedures will assist strategy execution whereas inconsistent policies and procedures will hamper effective strategy execution. They further note that organisations that embrace leading processes and procedures in pursuit of perpetual excellence are bound to better execute their strategy.

Khadem (2008:30) and Antunes, *et al.*, (2010:2) add another dimension of thinking by stating that the business as usual processes should lead to realising a company's vision and fresh processes will enable new strategic outcomes. In addition to this, they state that for strategy execution to be successful there has to be synergy between vision, values and strategy. Getz and Lee (2011:303) concur with this by emphasising that for strategy execution to be effective new processes must clearly defined as existing processes are not ideal for effecting the required step change. Henceforth a pensive process is to be followed in order to ensure successful strategy execution. Cocks (2010:264) has a different view and expresses that for strategy execution to be successful rigorous end to end systems need to be a priority and these include standard operating procedures, governance, recruitment and selection as well as incentives.

The above-mentioned viewpoints underpin the sentiments of Kaplan and Norton (2005:9) where they emphasise that after companies developed their balanced scorecards to aid effective strategy execution, they then continue with past planning techniques and that this prevented them from attaining the full value of their strategy. Cocks (2010:263) recommend three pillars for effective strategy execution:

- direction – a roadmap for where to go;
- structure – a holistic description for how work will be conducted; and

- people – resources for doing the work.

The other major component of this step is the aligning of strategic plans to forecasting and the required funding (Kaplan and Norton, 2008:14). Thompson, *et al.*, (2007:362), Kaplan and Norton (2008:14) declare that in achieving this, it will ensure that financial, resource and operational planning will then reflect the path and essentials of the strategy to be executed. Srivastava and Sushil (2013:556) supplements this view and are of the opinion that strategy execution is often hampered because of loosely defined strategic performance metrics and ignorance of the impact of its interdependencies.

Therefore, they propose the total interpretive structure modelling (TISM) integrated strategic performance factor framework that will benefit execution in this ever-changing commercial environment. Their study also reviews the interdependency among the strategic performance metrics to highlight their importance. Therefore, they conclude that their strategic performance framework could be an ideal governance tool for successful strategy execution.

2.2.3.6 Observation and Improvement

Once the strategy and operational planning phase is concluded, it is imperative that the strategy is continuously monitored to track performance and deviations that might negatively affect delivery of the strategy (Kaplan and Norton, 2008:15). The authors believe that operational meetings must be utilised to study departmental and functional performance in order to identify the issues to be addressed. Furthermore, Kaplan and Norton (2008:15) comment that strategy review meetings must also be conducted in order to discuss deviations and understand obstacles to strategy execution.

They recommend that the operational and strategy review meetings happen independently of each other in order for the issues on various agendas to be discussed in a focused manner Franken, *et al.*, (2009:57) believes that

companies should not only be able to execute their strategy successfully. They should also be in a position to monitor and learn how to improve on executing the strategy.

2.2.3.7 Modification

The final step in the Kaplan and Norton's (2008:16) closed loop management system is the testing and the adaptation of the strategy being executed. It allows the company and those accountable to assess the relevance of the strategy and take timely corrective action at a strategic level to ensure the strategic objectives are achieved. Morgan, *et al.*, (2007:181) and Franken, *et al.*, (2009:57) echo similar sentiments by stating that for strategy execution to be effective there are two key components: that the objectives for the initiatives aimed at executing the strategy have to stay applicable and viable.

Morgan, *et al.*, (2007:181) balances this by declaring that top management should consistently assess, not only the strategy and but also its initiatives being implemented to achieve the strategy. Raffoni (2003:4), Morgan, *et al.*, (2007:182), Franken, *et al.*, (2009:54) and Sull, *et al.*, (2017:103) note that companies can do so by keeping their finger on the pulse of governance structures that will allow them to stay in touch with the performance of their initiatives. This will allow them to make the required decisions on how to keep the strategy execution process on track.

Morgan, *et al.*, (2007:181) coin this the syntheses of strategy execution, which is no easy task due to the ever changing business world. According to Morgan, *et al.* (2007:181), Franken, *et al.*, (2009:56), Cocks (2010:261) and Alsudiri, Al-Karaghoul and Eldabi (2013:612) companies constantly have to adapt to changes from both the internal and external business environment that impacts the strategy being executed. MacLennan (2011:53) enriches this thought and declares that aligning company plans and structures are key for successful strategy execution. He refers to this as the compatibility that should align activities and ensure that these activities propel the organisation in achieving a common goal and not being counterproductive. In addition, the

institutional elements must be reconciled with important actions and be illustrated in a rational manner for decision-making purposes. These phases also incorporate internal and external environmental analysis that assists in ascertaining operational metrics and risks that are key considerations for effective strategy execution.

The key to this six-step framework is that it is an inclusive and aligned management process, which aligns the strategic planning with the execution of the strategy, at operational level (Kaplan and Norton, 2008). Morgan, *et al.*, (2007) have a similar opinion. They are of the view that strategy execution requires a complete methodology that allows a company to execute the appropriate initiatives efficiently and effectively. Furthermore, they express that a holistic methodology will afford the company the chance to select and rank the projects in order of importance. In so doing the company will be in a position to sensitise the entire organisation as to what the interdependencies are and what is required in order to execute the strategy.

MacLennan (2011:54) is of the view that the term continuity is integral over an extended period. He refers to this as an organisation's ability to maintain the strategy execution impetus with all the disruptions of day-to-day operational and business activities. Conveying the required knowledge and skills in and amongst the normal demands of a complex business environment can be a daunting task. Hence successful strategy execution is dependent on the impetus created by causality, criticality and compatibility.

Clarity refers to the clear understanding of what is required to execute a strategy successfully. To complement this clear and specific communication is required. This will contribute towards teams being very clear of what the strategy is and what is required to make it happen (MacLennan, 2011:55).

Higgins (2005:3), Khadem (2008:29) and Cocks (2010:264) agree that for effective and successful strategy execution there has to be synergy amongst key organisational dynamics. Higgins (2005:3) cites that with the ever-

evolving business and economic environment strategic direction there is continuous change hence the application and synergising of process remains an issue. He further states that with companies following a functional design, the integration elements are often ignored when strategies evolve. Cocks (2010:264) assents and mentions that greater cooperation is required regarding functionally designed companies, in order to ensure that all the dependencies are addressed for effective strategy execution.

In order to compensate for this, he introduced the eight “S”s of strategy execution. Higgins (2005:12) states that this is an investigative approach that allows management to scrutinise the interdependent strategies and take corrective action when required. The eight ‘S’s model is a change to the authentic McKinsey 7 ‘S’s framework where resources replaces skills. Furthermore, Strategic Performance has been added to the framework to maintain the intensity of strategy execution. The remaining factors of the eight “S”s model are Strategy and Purpose, Structure, Systems and Processes, Style, Staff, Resources and Shared Values.

He concludes by citing that at interdepartmental level, virtually all the key indicators are covered within the eight ‘S’s framework. Through utilising this framework, the leadership team can proactively address any potential issues that might hamper successful strategy execution. This model can also serve as a holistic strategy execution roadmap for an organisation.

According Morgan, *et al.*, (2007:213) transitioning of initiatives to the operational environment is critical for successful strategy execution. If this is not successfully completed a company will risk not being able to implement its strategy and receive the desired returns on investment. Transitioning will allow the company to receive regular feedback from the operations environment regarding the progress and tracking of initiatives implemented. According Morgan, *et al.*, (2007:213) and Speculand (2014:30) this will afford the company an opportunity to monitor the data for continuous improvement and adaption of the strategy as well as the execution as required. Higgins (2005:4) Morgan, *et al.* (2007:213); Kaplan and Norton (2008:11), Khadem (2008:29),

Cocks (2010:264) and MacLennan (2011:53) are in agreement that for strategy execution to be successful there must be alignment of resources and activities throughout the entire organisation.

2.3 Strategy-as-Practice

According to Jarzabkowski and Spee (2009:69) strategy-as-practice is about the carrying out of strategy. It is the “Who does it, what they do, how they do it, what they use and what implications this has for shaping strategy”. Whittington (2006:618), Jarzabkowski and Spee (2009:70), Vaara and Whittington (2012:1) and Rouleau (2013:548) state that strategy-as-practice consists of three related components. That is, (1) strategy practitioners: the people responsible for performing strategic activity, (2) strategy practices: consist of the procedures and customs utilised for strategy activity. The last component being (3) strategy as praxis: which is concerned with the strategy work actions being performed by the strategy practitioners. These three components are discussed below.

2.3.1 Strategy Practices

Whittington (2006:619) and Jarzabkowski and Spee (2009:70) refer to strategy practices as the routines, procedures, tools and norms via which the strategy deliverables are performed. Jarzabkowski and Spee (2009:81) are of the view that strategy practices are complex and not always clearly defined by the strategy practitioner. Hence, this research could provide guidance by informing the strategy practices component from a strategy execution perspective, which informs the procedures and norms utilised during strategy execution.

Whittington (2006:620) believe that strategy practices are not required to link the three components, viz. praxis, practice and practitioner simultaneously. A link between the subsets of the three main components is needed and what there overall contribution to the strategic process will be.

2.3.2 Strategy Praxis

Whittington (2006:619) describes strategy praxis as the internal company activities for formulating and executing the strategy. The strategy praxis area is very broad and covers both official and informal actions within the company (Whittington, 2006:619). Jarzabkowski and Spee (2009:73) accentuates this notion and states, “strategy praxis is a stream of activity in which strategy is accomplished over time”.

Furthermore, Jarzabkowski and Spee (2009:73) declares that their definition of strategy praxis affords them the opportunity to link the micro level strategy praxis. Micro level strategy praxis alludes to the individual and team experiences within the macro level strategy praxis that entails the strategy praxis at an institutional level. Lastly, they can link these from a meso perspective, which is strategy praxis at an organisational level and sub-organisational level. They are of the view that by creating this link they can indicate that strategy praxis is entrenched within all levels in an organisation (Jarzabkowski and Spee, 2009:73).

Whittington (2006:620) is of the opinion that a better understanding of strategy from an external perspective will assist in improving strategy praxis within an organisation. He believes that improved praxis will contribute to developing relevant practices and practitioners to the benefit of an organisation.

Jarzabkowski and Spee (2009:69) believe that the development of strategy-as-practice as a research topic is due to the discontent with orthodox strategy research. Rouleau (2013:547) complements this by mentioning that strategy-as-practice could possibly experience constant development by exploring different areas and enhance its knowledge contribution to the subject of strategy-as-practice.

2.3.3 Strategy Practitioners

Whittington (2006:619), Jarzabkowski and Spee (2009:72) and Rouleau (2013:548) define strategy practitioners as people who conduct strategy work and are not limited only to senior management in an organisation. These

practitioners could also be internal staff members or external consultants (Jarzabkowski and Spee, 2009:72) and have a dynamic mix of culture, gender and socio-political skills that determine how they implement strategy work (Vaara and Whittington, 2012:20).

Strategy practitioners are prevalent throughout an entire organisation executing strategy. Whittington (2006:619) accentuates that practitioners are important in synthesizing the internal company praxis with the company and the external company practices. In drawing on previous situations, strategy practitioners are in a position to change practices and introduce new dimensions to the current practice for the benefit of the company.

This research focuses on how the project management discipline is utilised as a strategy practice component during strategy execution. Young, Young, Jordan and O'Connor (2012:887) and Young and Grant (2014:5) discovered with the aid of their qualitative studies that the project management discipline was utilised as a strategy practice during strategy execution. Cocks (2010:264), Young *et al.*, (2012:893) and Young and Grant (2014:5) reveal that the institutions within their study invested significantly in project management resources such as tools and skills to execute their strategy. In addition, project management offices were established to ensure that projects being executed were in alignment with the organisations strategy and provide responsibility for the execution of strategy (Young and Grant, 2014:5). Furthermore, Cocks (2010:265) states that program management units were commissioned to govern the project management discipline when utilising the project management tools and skills during strategy execution.

Based on the comment by Rouleau (2013:551) that strategy-as-practice, could possibly experience constant development by exploring different areas and enhancing its knowledge contribution to the subject of strategy-as-practice. This research aligns with the comment and aims to provide insight and add to the research regarding strategy-as-practice. Rouleau (2013:551) reveals that current research pertaining to strategy-as-practice needs to address the multiple meanings of strategy-as-practice, secondly it should then

investigate how the opinions of foremost commentators have assisted the new knowledge strategy-as-practice project. Lastly, it must address the future challenges for strategy-as-practice from a philosophy and procedural assessment.

The research might also reveal the influence strategy praxis have on the application of strategy practices such as project management especially when executing strategies. This is significant due to the limited literature regarding the project management discipline as a strategy practice. Based on the above-mentioned the research could contribute to the strategy-as-practice body of knowledge and its perpetual advancement by indicating if the project management discipline could be utilised as a strategy practice during strategy executing.

2.4 Strategy Execution and Organisational Architecture

Strategy execution is about aligning the organisational architecture and the strategic plans. Wade and Recardo (2001:52) defines organisational architecture as “the human side of the company”. This architecture includes the following: skills and competencies that a company needs to be successful; how communication will be achieved with employees and the outside world; the control systems needed to ensure smooth company functioning; the performance measurement system to assess direction and success; the human resource system to manage people issues; structure to show people where they work and their relationship with other parts of the company. Furthermore, it includes business systems that provide the productivity tools needed, and culture, the glue that binds the company together.

Louw and Venter (2010:478) add to the definition by stating that “organisational architecture is an integrated strategic response that draws together key dimensions of the organisation, such as organisational structure, leadership, organisational culture, policies and strategies to guide formulation, alignment and implementation. Organisational architecture thus provides a blueprint of the internal and largely invisible workings of the organisation”. They are of the view that this blueprint serves as a valuable instrument and

affords management the chance to co-ordinate key components of their company with the strategy that will enable them to achieve successful strategy execution. Finally, Lee, Venter and Bates (2004:14) add that organisational architecture is “a collectively agreed and communicated document that, in light of the strategic competencies needed to fulfil stakeholder needs, defines and details the major building blocks of the enterprise”.

Louw and Venter (2010:480) are of the view that there are important attributes that underpin an effective organisational architecture. Firstly, they state that the organisational architecture must be included in official company documentation that defines the business objectives and that the entire company must agree to achieve these strategic objectives. This will enable the monitoring of progress since the entire organisation is working towards achieving shared business and strategic objectives. Each element of the organisational architecture must be referenced to the company. This will allow the design of a plan to the company in order to achieve its strategic objectives. Lepsinger (2011:55) supports this notion by stating that an appropriate structure fosters accountability and coordination of objectives within the company. Lee, *et al.*, (2004:16) mention that there are numerous organisational architecture charters or approaches that have been promoted as listed in the table below in Table 2-2.

These charters or approaches are analysed to gain an understanding of how organisational architectures are impacted during strategy execution when utilising the project management discipline. The Ulrich model reviews organisational architecture in terms alignment, governance as well as business and management capability. The McKinsey model assess it according to strategy, structure, the value system and capability. The Higgins model covers similar areas to the above and have included performance and the way in which organisations conduct their work. The Nihilent model reviews organisational architecture in terms of overall capability, motivation to perform as well as their capacity. Galbraith assesses the same areas as Nihilent but have added incentives and a review of the organisational strategy in their model. The Veasey as well as the Lee approach looks at stakeholder and

technology capability as well as culture. Wolfenden and Welch reviews the policies, processes and capability when assessing organisational architecture.

Table 2-2: Categorised Organisational Architecture Models

Legend	Practices	Proficiency	Resources	Strategy	Structure	Culture	
Ulrich	McKinsey 7S	Higgins Model	Nihilent	Jay Galbraith	Veasey	Wolfenden and Welch	Lee et al
Shared mind-set	Strategy	Strategy purposes &	Calibration	Strategy	Processes	Customer segmentation	Culture
Consequence	Skills	Systems processes &	Capability	Rewards	Competencies	Activities	Knowledge, skills & abilities
Governance	Shared Values	Style	Capacity	Processes	Culture	Roles	Technology
Competence	Style	Structure	Motivation	Structure	Organisation technology	Customer life cycle interaction	Structure systems
Capacity for change	Structure	Processes		People	Stakeholder & capabilities	Co-ordination activity	Processes
Leadership	Systems	Resources				Business rules	Internal & external capabilities
	Staff	Shared values				Business processes	
		Strategic performance					

Source: (Louw and Venter, 2010)

The analysis of the organisational architecture models revealed six common categories that are important for an effective organisational architecture. These have been categorised utilising colour coding and are illustrated in the above-mentioned Table 2-2 and are as follows:

- Strategy – a well-developed and defined strategy to be executed.
- Practices – which refer to the processes, systems and governance in place within the organisation.
- Proficiency – the knowledge, skills, abilities, capabilities and competencies within and external to the organisation.
- Resources – both human and non-human resources required for execution
- Structure – an organisational structure in place to execute the strategy.

- Culture – this refers to a culture conducive to the strategy being executed.

Lee, *et al.*, (2004:16) are of the view that these architectures concentrate on related underlying components. With differentiation occurring during the application phase, these underlying components are altered to meet the needs of the specific organisations. Based on the above-mentioned analysis Lee, *et al.*, (2004:16) developed an all-encompassing organisational architecture. According to Louw and Venter (2010:482) the below-mentioned Lee, *et al.*, (2004:16) organisational architecture assimilates the various frameworks into an organised plan aimed at effective strategy execution.

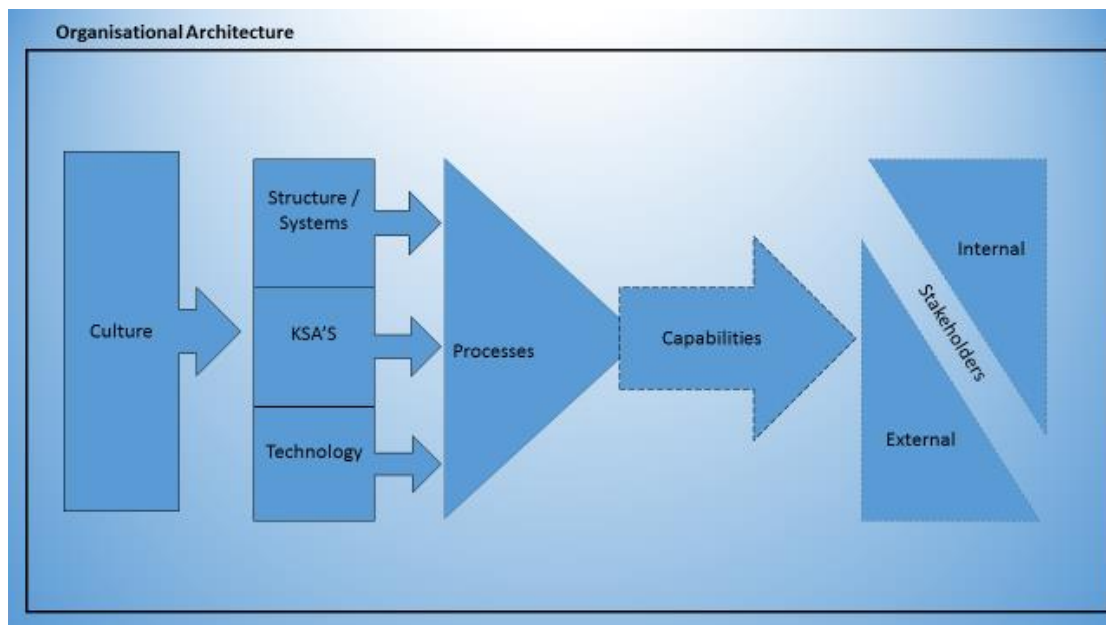


Figure 2-2: Organisational Architecture (Lee, *et al.* 2004).

Lee, *et al.*, (2004:16) interprets this model from right to left as follows. "In this architecture, capabilities are delivered to stakeholders through processes. Processes are instituted via structure and systems, KSAs (knowledge, skills and abilities) and technology. Finally, culture underlies all other elements". The various components of this model are elaborated on below.

2.4.1 Stakeholders

Stakeholders are persons who have an interest in the company because they are affected by the functioning of the company or institution. They can be either within or outside of the company. Henceforth it is key to identify them in order to address their interests adequately by producing the capabilities they desire (Lee, *et al.*, 2004:17).

2.4.2 Capabilities

Lee, *et al.*, (2004:17) believes that capabilities are outputs that the company delivers to its stakeholders in order to achieve its strategic objectives. These are situational as they are reliant on the type of company and what strategy this company has selected to pursue (Louw and Venter, 2010:486). Larger institutions are in a position to produce a variety of capabilities when compared to smaller institutions. They are of the opinion that an ideal list of capabilities does not exist. Institutions must deliver what they can within their own sphere (Lee, *et al.*, 2004:17). Thompson, *et al.*, (2007:87) complement this notion and believes that developing a competent organisation with proficiencies, capabilities and adequate staff is important for successful strategy execution.

2.4.3 Processes

Veasey (2001:424) expresses that processes are important to the organisational architecture as they are pivotal in producing the organisational capabilities. MacLennan (2011:158) accentuates that processes are transversal within organisations and addresses the issue of individualistic reasoning and departmental discord for the better of the organisation. Olson, Slater and Hult (2005:49) states that policies, processes and procedures control the manner in which organisations function and refers to this as formalisation. Veasey (2001:428) groups these processes together as management, operational and support processes.

2.4.3.1 Management processes

According to Louw and Venter (2010:488), the management processes constitute planning, organising, leading and controlling management responsibilities that drive the strategic focus. They also state, “The manager’s work agenda informs the work methods and roles deployed. These in turn feed into and inform the traditional management tasks, resulting in delivery of capabilities”.

2.4.3.2 Operational processes

Operational processes are mainly accountable for a company’s goods and services. Companies deliver these goods and services via four strategies: process, repetitive or product focus as well as bulk customisation (Louw and Venter, 2010).

2.4.3.3 Support processes

These processes offer support to the main business of a company. These jobs and roles are on the outskirts of a company yet they are pivotal to ensuring that the company operates in a sound and seamless manner (Louw and Venter, 2010:488).

2.4.4. Organisational structure and systems

The organisational structure, coupled with systems, skills, the approach of staff and technology, steer the processes that are important for effective strategy execution. Organisational structures enable a sense of guidance and commitment in an organisation. It guides the organisation in achieving its objectives through assigning responsibility and accountability. Organisational structure is important in ensuring successful strategy execution and accomplishing strategic obligations (Louw and Venter, 2010:489).

According to Leibbrandt and Botha (2015:15) “structure can be defined as the relationship between tasks, individuals and formal and informal channels” They are of the view that it is extremely difficult to achieve execution within

organisations due to the complexity of numerous stakeholders, conflicting processes and ambiguous decisions. They also express that the re-designing of the organisational architecture does not guarantee that execution of strategies will improve. They further mention that even though organisational architecture is an integral part of strategy execution, they are of the opinion that “people and their skills are becoming an even higher strategic element in executing strategy in this complex environment”.

The Leibbrandt and Botha (2015:18) quantitative study was conducted within the SA local government environment. The sample survey included Metropolitan, district and local municipalities and the targeted role players within SA. The SA local government sphere is very politically driven. Hence, the findings of the Leibbrandt and Botha (2015:18) study cannot be generalised to the private sector. With this being, a quantitative study there was not an opportunity for follow up questions by the researcher. Neither was there an opportunity for the participants to provide additional information or seek clarity regarding questions where they might have been uncertain.

Louw and Venter (2010:489) accentuate that while planning organisational structures, there is a requirement for companies to be cognisant of crucial spheres within the company. They are of the view that the strategy selected has an influence on the disposition of the organisational structure. Furthermore, they state that there is a need for organisational structures that are aptly swift to respond. Thompson, *et al.*, (2007:20) emphasise that events, which are of strategic importance, should be the key components for structuring an organisation. This will ensure that these events receive the desired attention in order to ensure successful strategy execution.

Olson, Slater and Halt (2005:49) believe there are three crucial organisational structure components pertaining to strategy execution. Namely formalisation, centralisation and specialisation. This will be discussed in the subsections that follow.

2.4.4.1 Organisational structure components and plan

Louw and Venter, (2010:490) express that organisational structure consists of four important areas. Namely division of labour, departmentalisation, span of control and delegation of authority. These areas are elaborated on below.

2.4.4.1.1 Division of labour

This refers to jobs requiring distinct skills, sequencing and dependency as well as the degree of authority bestowed to a person. Within these focused conditions, tasks have a restricted concentration and scope with a significant amount of monotonous tasks. Institutions with limited specialisation requirements is likely to bestow more power to employees via role enhancement. (Louw and Venter, 2010:491). Olson, Slater and Hult (2005:50) concur and mentions that specialisation describes the manner in which duties are split within the organisation. They are of the view that where a concentrated degree of specialists is needed they tend to perform their well-defined duties efficiently and effectively. Conversely, they state that where generalists are involved duties tend to take longer due to the additional effort required in understanding the job at hand. However, the sample for Olson, Slater and Hult (2005:54) was limited to the senior marketing fraternity of their population. Unfortunately, this fraternity is not the only segment responsible of strategy execution. Hence, this is a limited view of what contributes to strategy execution.

2.4.4.1.2 Departmentalisation

Departmentalisation describes the method in which roles are clustered together within a company. Roles are clustered per product, location or the category of the role. This is usually illustrated in the form of a diagram with line flows indicating the role hierarchy (Louw and Venter, 2010:491).

(a) Functional approach

According to Louw and Venter (2010:492) the functional approach is unsophisticated and frequently utilised. With this approach, jobs or roles are clustered as per the category of the role. E.g. Financial accounting, audit,

information technology or human resources. The functional approach is renowned for enabling “efficiency and effectiveness as well as easier coordination within departments (Louw and Venter, 2010:492)”. However, they state that a limitation of this approach is the lack of inter departmental synchronisation when significant issues must be resolved throughout the entire company. They reason that persons within these areas possess a narrow awareness of collaboration with the entire company as a whole. Hence, they are of the opinion that due to the interdepartmental reliance if issues are not resolved promptly it could result in endless delays (Louw and Venter, 2010:492).

(b) Divisional approach

Institutions utilising this approach have a customer-centric emphasis and address the requirements in line with the product or area wants and needs. They include the desired functional elements within the division to ensure synergy between the individual area and functional area strategy. A major limitation of the divisional approach is the replication of resources and tasks and the cost associated with this. Furthermore, divisions could potentially cause a toxic competitive battle for resources thus concentrating on their specific strategy and not that of the entire institution as required (Louw and Venter, 2010:493) which in turn, could lead to inadequate strategy execution.

(c) Matrix approach

The matrix approach is a superimposition of the divisional structure on a functional structure. The matrix model is typically utilised within the project and brand directed institutions. It provides a form of cover to the divisional approach by product. The matrix approach is beneficial in that it demands dedicated attention to the delivery of a specific project or product. In so doing, it breeds a collaborative culture for knowledge, skills, abilities and resources for the benefit of the entire institution (Louw and Venter, 2010:494). This is beneficial for effective strategy execution, in so far that those employees will be in an ideal environment to work towards common goals and objectives.

The matrix approach has a few limitations. Uncertainty can arise due to multiple reporting lines. Issues may result due to the respective leaders wanting to influence organisational politics by claiming ownership and credit for delivering these specific projects or products. The unhealthy competition for limited skilled resources across the company is another potential issue to surface (Louw and Venter, 2010:496). This will cause instability and toxic relationships to the detriment of the pursued strategy.

(d) Virtual approach

Virtual company's or institutions are the latest trends in the dynamic and at times uncertain commercial world. This is due to the need for companies to be alert and accessible because of the pressures placed on them by the commercial world. With the virtual approach company's concentrate on their primary business functions and have the secondary functions performed by third party vendors. This approach affords companies the opportunity to focus and be the best at their primary business (Louw and Venter, 2010:496).

2.4.4.1.3 Span of control

Another element that influences organisational structure, is the span of control which is affected by a number of key factors. Firstly, the frequency of interactions between staff and line management is a factor. This is usually prevalent in environments that are in need of close supervision due to tight deadlines or where there is significant ambiguity that require the guidance from line management. Intense hands on management is necessitated to achieve the desired goals. Due to this management has a limited number of direct reports due to the intensity required to manage the outputs. Secondly, the converse applies where less frequent interactions are needed between staff and line management. This occurs in environments where jobs are uncomplicated with a significant amount of replication. Finally, the type of company and the organisational design strategy being pursued will also affect the span control dynamic (Gibson, Ivancevich and Donnelly, 1997).

2.4.4.1.4 Delegation of authority

The last element in the organisational design structure is the delegation of authority component. The question is, if senior management owns this or if middle management and the level below that are entrusted with this function (Olson, Slater and Hult, 2005:49). Delegation of authority indicates how decision-making is dispersed within the company (Louw and Venter, 2010:499). They highlight the following benefits regarding the delegation of authority.

- Staff who have decision-making powers bestowed on them are more inspired than staff who do not have this privilege.
- Management is not required to manage staff intensely and are free to focus on strategy.
- Staff are engaged regarding decision-making and it fosters an open and involved working atmosphere.
- It offers job growth as well as job satisfaction because staff are afforded responsibility and accountability regarding key decisions. This could lead to staff taking initiative to resolve issues and foster pioneering thinking (Louw and Venter, 2010:499).

Olson, Slater and Hult (2005:49) are of the view that a centralised decision-making model aids strategy execution as there is less bureaucracy when compared to a decentralised decision-making model. However, they state that a centralised decision-making model is best suited to established and uncomplicated environments. Thompson, *et al.*, (2007:379) believes that the centralisation model allows for firmer control and less complexity in terms of accountability. In a decentralised model, the decision-making is delegated to the lowest level within the organisation, which allows for swift and timely responses to issues. There is a need for capable staff at this level to manage the added responsibility (Thompson, *et al.*, 2007:379).

MacLennan (2011:151) has a different view as mentioned above by (Olson, Slater and Hult, 2005:49). He believes that highlighting important

organisational events is a key enabler for sound decision-making in supporting aligning the organisational architecture and procedures.

Hrebiniak (2006:20), Lepsinger (2011:54) and MacLennan (2011:151) accentuates that when the centralisation and decentralisation debate arises leaders often battle to discover the ideal balance. MacLennan (2011:152) expresses that centralised or decentralised decision-making will either benefit or stifle the important organisational events highlighted. Identifying these important organisational events and aligning it with the organisational architecture and procedures will provide a frame of reference for this decision in order to achieve the ideal centralisation or decentralisation balance (MacLennan, 2011:152). Hrebiniak, (2006:20), Morgan, Levitt and Malek (2007) and MacLennan (2011:153) believe that a dynamic organisational architecture will be required and not necessarily a mutually exclusive centralised or decentralised model.

However, the delegation of authority is not without limitations. Staff might not have the desired competency and skills for these additional duties hence resulting in poor decision making. Management might interpret the delegation of authority as a dilution of power and may become despondent because of the delegation of authority (Louw and Venter, 2010:499). Thompson, *et al.*, (2007:379) highlights that a centralised model can result in organisations becoming lethargic due to the delays in decision-making. They are of the view that a centralised decision-making model is often unrealistic. Hence, they state that the decentralised decision-making model is ideal for strategy execution. They are of the mind that human resource investments and skills are critical to organisations in the information age.

2.4.4.2 Organisational paradigms

Louw and Venter (2010:501) express that an organisational structure is influenced by either a Newtonian or chaordic theory. They are of the view that these theories create the impression that the global environment is organised and certain. "The Newtonian paradigm is predicted on Newtonian science"

(Louw and Venter, 2010: 501). “It offers the promise of a law-abiding and predictable universe, a belief strengthened by the notion that relationships between cause and effect are simple, clear, and linear” (Tetenbaum, 1998:21). This theory is underpinned by a concentrated administration, tiered organisations and strict inflexible conditions (Louw and Venter, 2010:501).

The chaordic theory is synonymous with chaos in the form of continuous swift transformation, doubt, volatile situations and results, which is evident in the present commercial environment. Even though its chaos, instructions are adhered to and as a result, chaordic theory establishes order out of the chaos that emerges. Chaordic institutions have a significant degree of dissemination of power that encourages employee accountability and responsibility (Louw and Venter, 2010:502).

2.4.4.3 Strategic outcomes

According to Louw and Venter (2010:502) a rigorous organisational structure and plan will lead to important strategic advances for institutions. Advances such as “improved effectiveness and efficiency as a result of better, more streamlined organisational design. Better quality of goods and services and increased productivity as a result of the organisation allowing employees greater autonomy” (Louw and Venter, 2010:503).

2.4.5 Systems, policies and procedures

Louw and Venter (2010:503) and Thompson, *et al.*, (2007:391) emphasises that systems, policies and procedures are a critical component in aiding the processes needed for successful strategy execution. According to Thompson, *et al.*, (2007:391) policies and procedures in the business world are utilised to control and direct staff when performing their duties. They are of the view that policies and procedures enable strategic positioning and execution in the following ways. Furthermore, policies and procedures assist in developing a strategy execution culture. However, Thompson, *et al.*, (2007:390) cautions against over regulation that might stifle rather than support strategy execution.

The rewarding of staff for performance is very important to the strategy execution mission. Organisations should provide both monetary and non-monetary motivations in order to maintain staff interest and motivation to achieve the strategic objectives. For the rewards system to be effective the performance management system must be sound. This system should routinely be utilised to ensure the staff's performance is in line with the institutions goals and objectives (Louw and Venter, 2010:504; and Thompson, *et al.*, 2007:405).

2.4.6 Knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA's)

Louw and Venter (2010:508) are of the view that KSA's are vital elements of the strategy cause. It is imperative that institutions possess these, as it is critical to institutional development and success. They categorise KSA's as "basic, specific and distinctive (Louw and Venter, 2010: 508)". Basic KSA's are essential throughout the entire company. These are vital to the effectiveness of the daily operational activities. While specific KSA's are synonymous with institutions main capabilities. Distinctive KSA's enable an institution to achieve and maintain their commercial advantage over their rivals. Thompson, *et al.*, (2007:367) complement this by stating that leadership can enhance successful strategy execution by encouraging their institution to utilise best practices and pursue perpetual advancement.

2.4.7 Technology

Technology is fundamental in the enabling of processes within institutions and can create important competencies and commercial rewards for institutions (Bateman and Snell, 2002 and Thompson, *et al.*, 2007:402). A technological edge is relatively limited in the commercial world due to the rapid advances in this field. Implementing a certain technology does not guarantee success. Due to the potential huge financial outlay and the ability of competitors to implement similar technologies within a reasonably limited timeframe. Being a technological first mover can create significant competitive advantages. Such as greater market share, economies of scale and learning with the new technology (Bateman and Snell, 2002).

2.4.8 Organisational Culture

Organisational culture is distinctive to an organisation. It is perceived as the customs, morals and principles practiced by employees within an organisation. Olson, Slater and Hult (2005:49) believes that governance shapes a certain organisational culture and is an enabler for continuous efficiency and reduced costs. Hence, culture is important for creating the basis for enabling the processes, designing the structure and system to be implemented, the quality of KSA's and the technology to be selected (Bartol and Martin, 1998 and Thompson, *et al.*, 2007:416). An ingrained culture plays a vital role in strategy alignment as well as strategy execution (Bartol and Martin, 1998).

2.4.9 Significance of Organisational Architecture

Louw and Venter (2010) emphasise the importance of organisational architecture for a company to successfully execute its strategy, it is dependent on its core operations. However, they are of the opinion that it is not sufficient for company's only to have their key elements in position. They emphasise that these elements must be aligned to ensure successful strategy execution.

In their quantitative study Olson, Slater and Hult (2005:52) found that firms that align organisational structure and strategic behaviour to strategy achieve better results than firms who do not. MacLennan (2011:151) as well as Getz and Lee (2011:304) are of the same mind and state that organisational architecture and procedures are fundamental to strategy execution. Simerson (2011:243) concurs and affirms that for envisaged changes to be effective organisations must change their organisational architecture and thinking.

Getz and Lee (2011:305), Morgan, Levitt and Malek (2007:93) and Hrebiniak, (2006:20) agree and states that diverse strategies need altered structures depending on where the organisation is positioned within the business lifecycle. Getz and Lee (2011:305) are of the same mind and express that for a company to develop a successful organisational architecture they have to identify what they call the "organisational imperatives". This will assist the

organisation in identifying what it can and should not do across numerous aspects. Once this is understood Getz and Lee (2011:305) are of the view that this will assist the leadership in designing the required organisational architecture.

Getz and Lee (2011:305) express that instituting fundamental change takes time. During this period, various changes occur due to the dynamic nature of business. New decisions are taken and different competencies developed. Hence, Getz and Lee (2011:305) stress that due to the dynamic changes the organisational architecture has to adjust and progress with these changes to achieve the desired strategic objectives. Corkindale (2011:1) is of the view that an ineffective organisational design causes uncertainty, misunderstanding and a lack of trust within the employee ranks. Resulting in ineffective strategy execution.

However, Lepsinger (2011:55) has a contrasting view and mentions that the pursuit of an ideal structure is a pointless exercise. He is of the view that an appropriate structure promotes “accountability, coordination and communication”.

Lee, *et al.*, (2004:14) believe that the organisational architecture theory has a vital constraint. They are of the mind that it will be very challenging for a major expanded company to have one specific organisational architecture for all its different commercial clusters. They highlight that these expanded type companies could require distinctive organisational architectures for the different commercial clusters that would contribute to effective strategy execution for the entire organisation. Differing organisational architectures will also influence staff moving between commercial clusters, as they have to adapt to the different organisational architectures that could delay the learning curve and ultimately delay or negatively influence strategy execution. An attempt to synergise the different organisational architectures across the commercial clusters within an organisation could provide a challenge due to the size and complexity.

Corkindale (2011:1) and Wade and Recardo (2001:56) pronounce that when organisations adapt or change their strategy they often do not consider adapting the entire organisational design. They focus on short term changes that require their immediate attention. Furthermore, Corkindale (2011:1) is of the view that due to the intricate nature of organisational design organisations underestimate the significance of an appropriate design due to their lack of understanding how to implement an adequate organisational design. Hence, organisations fail to adequately train staff how to execute their duties within a revised organisational design thus leading to ineffective strategy execution (Corkindale, 2011:1).

Organisational architecture regarding strategy execution covers a broad spectrum. This is evident with the various theoretical perspectives pertaining to organisational architecture as illustrated in Table 2-2. What Table 2-2 displays is the number of components that constitutes a particular organisational architecture. The more components an organisational architecture consists of the greater the risk of complexity in the design. This is due to the numerous components that must be effectively executed to ensure an optimal organisational architecture.

If one or more components are not adequately executed the dependencies amongst these components are not identified and managed. There is a significant risk of a dysfunctional organisational architecture and an ineffective strategy execution process. Corkindale (2011:1) is of the view that an organisational design determines the association between how staff and positions within an institution operate. Hence, a dysfunctional organisational design will result in uncertainty and a lack of ownership amongst staff when performing their duties, which will result in poor strategy execution. However, Leibbrandt and Botha (2015:15) asserts, “people with the right skills, capabilities and attitude toward execution are key and even when an organizational structure is not perfect, they will perform and deliver what is expected”.

2.4.10 Leadership

Thompson, *et al.*, (2007:439) and Franken, *et al.*, (2009:54) are of the view that managing strategy execution should be a leadership responsibility. Thompson, *et al.*, (2007:439) and Franken, *et al.*, (2009:54) believe that those leading the strategy execution process should be in control via sound governance and awareness. This is achievable by driving the strategic outcome, being at the forefront of enabling competencies and capabilities, noting ethical issues, displaying integrity and driving initiatives. They are of the belief that the leadership team should be exemplary in leading and managing the strategy execution process.

Morgan, *et al.*, (2007), Thompson, *et al.*, (2007), Kaplan and Norton (2008), Franken, *et al.*, (2009) and MacLennan (2011) recommend a framework approach to strategy execution. They stipulate what must be done in order to execute a strategy. What is not evident in their framework approach is how strategy execution should be performed. Based on this identified shortcoming, this is where this research study can contribute to the strategy execution body of knowledge by providing an additional dimension on how a strategy or strategies should be executed.

With organisational architecture well researched the literature revealed the importance of addressing the detail when executing strategy. Hence, the role of project management to be incorporated as a practice and proficiency within strategy execution will provide another consideration for organisational architecture pertaining to strategy execution. It will trigger the thinking by organisations around all aspects of an organisational architecture model inclusive of the project management discipline.

2.5 Strategy Execution and Change Management

Change management in this context refers to the management of changes resulting from strategy execution, and how these are disseminated and managed throughout the entire organisation (Hrebiniak, 2006:24; Salih and Doll, 2013:33). Change management in relation to strategy execution is discussed due to the strategy execution issues experienced as a result of a

lack of effective change management. Hrebiniak (2006:24) and Salih and Doll (2013:36) are of the view that a major obstacle to strategy execution is an organisations failure to conduct effective change management. Hrebiniak (2006:24) and Salih and Doll (2013:36) accentuates that strategy execution regularly involves a myriad of changes to the organisational architecture hence the significance of adequately addressing the change management aspect effectively.

Srinivasan (2014:135) agrees and accentuates the above-mentioned by stating that we should encompass the change practicalities into the dynamic business environment to aid effective strategy execution. Simerson (2011:179) concurs and remarks that this will create the desired focus and importance for change management concerning effective strategy execution.

Hrebiniak (2006:25) believes that the speed and size of the change are two important factors to be managed effectively during the change management initiative. He believes that a narrow implementation window multiplies the change elements that must be considered concurrently. Furthermore, he is of the view that the change management initiative becomes complex during a narrow implementation window as more crucial elements must be considered in parallel. However, Hrebiniak (2006:25) recommends two methods to deal with massive change interventions related to strategy execution. Namely, the sequential and complex change methods.

2.5.1 Sequential change management

With the sequential change management method, the company organises the overall change intervention into reduced controllable sequential activities. The preceding activity serves as input to the activity that follows. Lessons learnt from the preceding activities are incorporated into the activities that follows. This continues until the cycle is complete (Hrebiniak, 2006:25). He believes that the sequential method is organised and is subject to meticulous planning. The benefits of root cause analysis of the preceding steps during the organised change management process allows for continuous improvement. He is also of the opinion that a measured environment is conducive to

organisation and education. Furthermore, he mentions that the sequential change method allows for incremental financing and the management of the risk associated with the change management intervention. With incremental changes, the immediate achievements can be communicated and enjoyed thereby enhancing stakeholder support (Hrebiniak, 2006:26).

However, the sequential change method has some pitfalls. The sequential method is time consuming. Stakeholder interest wane and they have less focus on the objectives to be achieved during this change management intervention. Factors external to the organisation change during this time-consuming sequential change management intervention. This could result in changes to the existing strategy to be executed and ultimately to the change management intervention (Hrebiniak, 2006:26). In order to mitigate these uncertainties during the sequential change management process the change management custodians must regularly praise and communicate change accomplishments. Lastly, the change management agents must continuously reinforce the change interventions and the benefits to the company in executing the strategy successfully (Hrebiniak, 2006:26).

2.5.2 Complex change management

The 'complex change management' method arises when there is limited time available for a sizable change management intervention. With limited time for the change management intervention, change activities must be addressed concurrently. This change management method encourages teamwork. People at all levels of the organisation work together to execute this complex change management (Hrebiniak, 2006:27). However, he recommends that the complex change management method should be not be utilised as it is tailored for disaster. He identifies four major pitfalls with the complex change management.

Firstly, the organisation and management of the complex intervention is challenging. Numerous activities are implemented concurrently at different locations in a relatively limited period. Secondly, the root cause analysis is complex due to numerous activities being implemented concurrently and

possibly at different locations and regions. With a number of activities being implemented at once, it is virtually impossible to pin point the issues. Time constraints might also not allow for adequate and effective root cause analysis.

Thirdly, due to the root cause analysis being impossible he states that the organisational understanding of the issues to be addressed will be hampered. Lastly, Hrebiniak (2006:28) emphasises that during this complex change management method there is a requirement to ease the performance measures against which employees are scored. Furthermore, he notes that in order to implement the complex change method effectively, additional hurdles must be removed. This is done to ensure employees are focused on the complex change intervention without distractions. This remains of concern because traditionally organisations do not ease the employee's performance measurement criteria. They expect employees to manage the 'complex change management' intervention in addition to their daily operational tasks.

Without this concession, the change intervention is headed for disaster and the change agents will be blamed for the unsuccessful execution of the change intervention (Hrebiniak, 2006:28). However, Kaplan and Norton (2008:12) concurs and emphasises that in order to achieve effective strategy execution the company should communicate and train staff about the strategy, link the employee key performance indicators and reward system to the strategy as well as aligning the employee training and development plans to the strategy. Salih and Doll (2013:36), Simerson (2011:179) and Saunders, Mann and Smith (2008:1108) complements this and emphasise that it is imperative for organisations to comprehend the elements and the significance of change relating to the intended strategies to be implemented. This will allow organisations insight into how the change management process must be designed and conducted.

Franken, *et al.*, (2009:51) emphasises this by stating that the change management custodians must utilise all the resources available to include and encourage staff to accept the change and ensure that it is successfully

implemented. They believe that the leadership must be exemplary in living the change initiative in order for the staff to accept the changes. Srinivasan (2014:140) is of the view that in order for change management to be implemented successfully the customer facing staff must be enabled. They must be equipped with the required resources such as education, training interventions and decision-making authority. This will allow them to manage the dynamic changes from the both the internal and external ecosystem within which they function (Srinivasan, 2014:140).

Lepsinger (2011:55) and Antunes, *et al.*, (2010:79) observes that there are numerous change management methodology's available and being applied throughout the corporate world. However not achieving successful change management continues as there is too much emphasis being placed on the type of methodology to be utilised. They state that change is not effected via a methodology. It occurs with a manager's direct engagement with his staff by applying sound management principles. They are also of the opinion that it is about the leadership ability to influence staff and get them to not only embrace but also execute the change.

Change management is a knowledge area within the project management methodologies applied. If the project management methodology is not applied, there is a risk of unstructured and disorganised change management during strategy execution. Therefore, an opportunity exists for the project management discipline to be entrenched for change management from a strategy execution perspective. Hence, this research discussing the role of project management in strategy execution will highlight this opportunity.

2.6 Utilisation of Project Management

Project Management is accomplished through the integration of the project management processes. Namely, initiating, planning, executing, monitoring, controlling and closing (Project Management Institute, n.d). They express that it is a strategic competency for organisations, enabling them to tie project results to business goals and thus better compete in their markets. It has been practiced informally, but emerged as a distinct profession in the mid-20th

century (Project Management Institute, n.d). Cocks (2010:264) further mentions that strategy execution and project management share key characteristics like sound governance, effective and regular dissemination of information that are important for successful strategy execution.

Kwak and Anbari (2009:435) as well as Mir and Pinnington (2013:202) state that project management is utilised in a variety of sectors to implement complex projects within time, budget and scope. This is further indication of the growth and importance of project management as a discipline.

This is evident by the number of international project management institutions that sets and governs the standards for project management. The following bodies are globally recognised:

- Association for the Advancement of Cost engineering (AACE)
- The Project Management Institute (PMI)
- The UK Association for Project Management (UK APM)
- The International Project Management Associations (IPMA)
- The Australian Institute of Project Management (AIPM)
- The American Academy of Project Management (AAPM)
- The International Association for Project and Program Management (IAPPM)

The exponential growth of these internationally recognised bodies is an indication of the importance of project management as a discipline. Browsing tons of newspapers and websites one will find numerous jobs for project managers advertised. The demand for this skill is just too great to ignore. This leaves very little doubt as to why the project management discipline is so highly utilised within the (SA) corporate environment.

The Association of Project Management, (n.d) in the United Kingdom defines project management as, a unique, transient endeavour, undertaken to achieve planned objectives, which could be defined in terms of outputs, outcomes or benefits. A project is usually deemed a success if it achieves the objectives according to their acceptance criteria, within an agreed timescale

and budget. They continue by stating that projects are separate to business as usual activities, requiring people to come together temporarily to focus on specific project objectives. Hence, effective teamwork is central to successful projects.

Ingason and Shepherd (2014:288) are of the opinion that the amount of unsuccessful projects is still significant even though the project management discipline has been under review and extensive research for more than three decades. They further state that alternative approaches are required to ensure successful delivery of projects.

Aubry and Hobbs (2011:4) concurs with the latter statement by emphasising that research on organisations performance in project management does not produce entirely satisfactory results. Contributions from research has benefit to the concept of project management, but a global vision of project management performance at the organisation level is still lacking.

Senior management and governing bodies focus on strategy design. In order for the strategic design to be effective there must be effectual implementation thereof. Strategy is effected via projects and programs, however senior management often does not appreciate the worth of project management because often project management is utilised as a tactical rather than a strategic competence. Project managers can refocus their role from tactical to strategic by linking projects to strategy. They can do so by gathering senior management and board concerns and then designing the project management capability to address these specific issues (Crawford, 2014:857).

2.7 Project management as an enabler for strategy execution

Project management is considered a competency within companies and best practice methodologies abound (Crawford, 2011). She is of the opinion that the term best practice is relative. Reason being that a company's project

management capability may have commonalities but operates in a different environment depending on the strategic intent (Crawford, 2011).

Karra (2008:98) found with certain reservations that strategy development and strategy execution is being aligned with project management. This study was conducted within three banking institutions in SA. The key areas for alignment were project environment, project tools, techniques, processes and project culture. Karra (2008:98) found the degree of alignment is not consistently applied hence the reservations. In her research “Fitting project management capability to strategy” determining the connection between company strategy and project management competence Crawford (2011) found that the more intense a company’s strategic emphasis, the greater the chance that they will utilise the project management discipline. In her definition of strategy, she utilised the Treacy and Wiersema value disciplines, namely, operational excellence, product leadership and customer intimacy. Hence, she looked at the project management and strategy fit from this perspective. However, this quantitative study’s data was collected via a business offered survey. Participants were tasked to indicate which of the project management activities presented to them existed within their companies. With project management activities, being present does not guarantee utilisation of these activities within a company. Being a quantitative study there was no opportunity for follow up questions to provide clarity or for participants to provide additional information.

Qualitative research conducted by Young, *et al.*, (2012:892) measuring the impact of project management and investment frameworks in the state of Victoria’s public sector yielded unsatisfactory results. They found no evidence to suggest that project management aided strategy execution despite a significant spending towards project management resources. The limitation of this study was that it was conducted only in the state of Victoria. In order to add credibility to this study Young and Grant (2014:1) repeated the qualitative study in the public sector of the state of New South Wales (NSW). For the same period under study, they found that there was some evidence to indicate that projects do in fact aid the achievement of strategic goals. Not much but

some. Hence they acknowledged that they have to alter (Young *et al.*, 2012) findings to reflect this.

The study by Young and Grant (2014:4) utilised the period 2001 to 2006 which is similar to the period utilised by (Young, *et al.*, 2012) in which both studied the New Public management sphere. Here it was found that a fifth of the strategy benefited from project management. However, Young and Grant (2014:4) added an additional period 2007 to 2010 whereby they studied an added approach known as the Whole of Government setting.

They mention that the Whole of Government setting was found to be more stable than the New Public Management setting. They attributed the fact that two fifths of the strategy could be contributed to effective project management due to the environmental stability. Hence the update of the Young, *et al.*, (2012:898) finding, that there was some evidence to indicate that projects do in fact aid the achievement of strategic goals. They further allude that this is concerning due to the fact that excellent project management and investment frameworks, tools and techniques are being applied. The identical case methodology was utilised for the two studies. Hence, it adds credibility to the findings of both.

Alsudiri, Al-Karaghoul and Eldabi (2013:597) are of the view that important projects are being executed that are not addressing organisational strategies. This is being done without the participation of the project managers at the conceptual stage. In their study on aligning the project management process to business strategy, they found a few reasons that are crucial to the project manager's involvement in strategy formulation. In comprehending the strategy, the project manager can progressively convey the strategy and its progress to senior management during execution. From a pragmatic perspective, the project manager can cascade an understanding of the strategy to his peers and team members during execution. With the project manager being entrenched end to end from strategic planning to execution, he/she has a holistic view of what the strategy is aiming to achieve. Hence, it can only contribute to a positive strategy execution atmosphere.

Spalek (2014:832) is of the opinion that companies administer numerous projects that are pivotal to their progress and improvement. These projects are often very influential towards the realisation of positive company performance from a functional and strategy perspective. Hence, companies have to be in touch with their project management performance by continuously assessing the development of their project management competency in order to add value to the organisation. Morgan, *et al.*, (2007:7) concurs and emphasise that it is imperative for the leadership team to apply project management when engaging the strategic revolution. Cocks (2010:265) supports this by stating that project management has appeared to aid strategy execution. His research found that a series of program management units have been introduced to provide project management skills and resources to execute on strategy related projects. Cocks (2010:264) is of the opinion that the key focus for project management is planning and executing and the same applies to strategy execution.

2.8 Conclusion

The literature revealed that the project management discipline is not frequently utilised within the initial stages of the strategic management lifecycle. It is more prevalent within the strategy execution phase. This is illustrated in (Figure 1-1). However, the limited literature on the utilisation of the project management discipline as an enabler for strategy execution revealed partial evidence of its effectiveness. An opportunity beckons for organisations to apply the project management discipline consistently, during strategy execution in order to meet their strategic goals. There is also a chance for the researcher to contribute to the body of knowledge of project management as an enabler for strategy execution by researching an additional industry. In so doing expanding the limited academic literature regarding this subject.

The key aspects to ensure effective strategy execution as discussed in this literature review chapter are encapsulated and explained in the project management based strategy execution conceptual framework below.

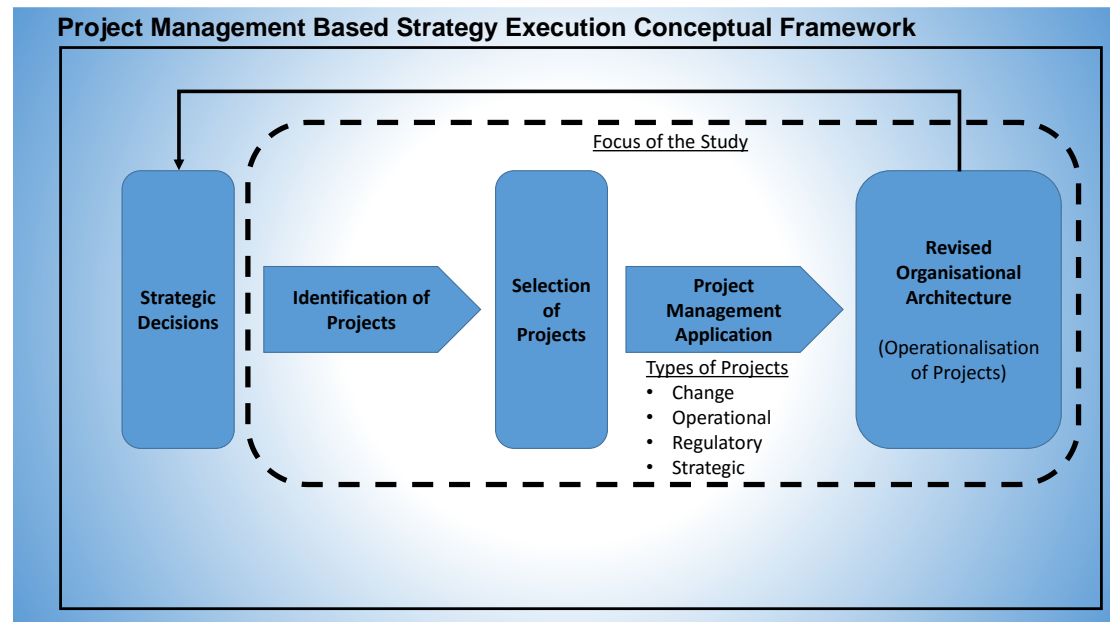


Figure 2-3: Project Management Based Strategy Execution Conceptual Framework

Hrebiniak (2006) believes that there are a number of formidable issues to be addressed to ensure successful strategy execution. He revealed that these could be addressed by applying strategy execution frameworks. Furthermore, he states that practical strategy execution will be a major learning benefit. Franken, *et al.*, (2009:51) concurs that there are numerous models that can be applied to ensure successful strategy execution. This fact is still evident from this literature review.

The literature revealed that the application of these models are situational depending on where an organisation is within their corporate lifecycle. What challenges they face and what strategies they are willing to pursue based on their current and future business objectives and goals. Thompson, *et al.*, (2010) highlights in (§ 2.2.2) that there are key principles that must be addressed that are integral to the strategy execution process.

These principles for strategy execution leads to and influences the strategic decisions to be followed. Once the strategic decisions have been taken, the identification of projects or programmes becomes crucial to strategy execution. Projects or programmes are identified in alignment to the strategic direction the organisation envisages to follow. This is indicated with the one directional arrow block in Figure 2-3. Once the projects or programmes have been identified the selection of projects/initiatives or programmes to be executed emerges as a key component within the strategy execution framework. Morgan, *et al.*, (2007:141), Thompson, *et al.*, (2007:375), Franken, *et al.*, (2009:54) and MacLennan (2011:53) agree by stating that a successful strategy and its execution consist of selecting and supporting to do the appropriate initiatives and executing it effectively.

Furthermore, Morgan, *et al.*, (2007:157) asserts that the selection process for project prioritisation should focus on each projects impact to the value adding events of the organisation. The project management discipline as an enabler for executing the strategic projects/initiatives or programmes is then applied to these selected projects/initiatives or programmes. The types of projects or programmes includes but is not limited to change, operational, regulatory and strategic projects.

The effectiveness of the projects implemented results in changes to the existing organisational architecture. It includes the handing over of projects to the business operation that influences the changes. Companies must align its strategy to the governance and operational processes in order to have the ability to maintain successful strategy execution. This will allow them to assign key performance indicators to employees for improvement, tracking and measurement (Kaplan and Norton, 2008:12).

The changes of these projects provides input to the strategic decisions continuously. This means the project management based strategy execution conceptual framework is an iterative process. A one directional arrow from the revised organisational architecture to the strategic direction component in Figure 2-3 illustrates this.

Figure 2-3 above indicates that organisational architecture provides an underlying basis for strategy execution. While these strategy execution components are being operationalised and improved, it results in changes to the existing organisational architecture.

The strategy execution framework should receive the required attention and application by organisations when executing their strategy. Morgan, *et al.*, (2007) asserts that strategy execution desires an extensive coordinated effort. For the strategy execution framework to be effective, all the components within the framework must be executed effectively.

The project management discipline as an enabler for strategy execution is a strategy practice utilised during strategy execution. The literature revealed that the project management discipline is more prevalent within the strategy execution phase. The effectiveness of project management as an enabler for strategy execution influences the effectiveness of strategy practices as well as strategy execution framework.

Hrebiniak (2006:24), Lepsinger (2011:53), Simerson (2011:245), Salih and Doll (2013:36) and Srinivasan (2014:140) believe that change management is critical for successful strategy execution. The literature divulges that organisations need to manage sequential and complex change management effectively to aid strategy execution. Hence, when project management is utilised for strategy execution a dedicated change management intervention must be instituted. The change management effectiveness will also provide feedback in terms of the strategy execution effectiveness.

Lee, *et al.*, (2004) emphasise the significance of organisational architecture pertaining to successful strategy execution. They are of the view that there is an abundance of these architectures. However, they state that these organisational architectures concentrate on related underlying components that have been categorised in Table 2-2. With the differentiation being during the application, of these underlying components being altered to the needs of

the specific organisations. With this perspective well researched the literature revealed the importance of addressing the detail when executing strategy.

The literature reveals that a mix of dimensions must be addressed in order for strategy execution to be successful. The literature review highlighted the importance of utilising the appropriate methodology to address the concepts under study. It reveals that strategy execution deserves more focus and attention as an academic discipline. Therefore this study of project management as an enabler for strategy execution will aid the thinking and future research regarding these concepts. The chapter that follows provides the research methodology to be utilised for this study.

Chapter 3 : Research Methodology

This chapter details the research methodology for this study.

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided a detailed account of the literature review regarding the role of project management during strategy execution. Specific components pertaining to the disciplines were discussed that resulted in the presentation of a project management based strategy execution conceptual framework that provides the conceptual basis for the study. Being an exploratory study the research methodology utilised is pivotal to addressing the following research question.

How is the project management discipline utilised in executing strategies within the South African telecommunications environment?

Furthermore, in this section the research methodology is examined in an in-depth manner. Thereafter the components of this methodology are discussed in detail and it is indicated how these will be applied during this study.

Flick, von Kardoff and Steinke (2004:5) state that methodology is crucial when conducting research. Researchers have to be aware of their landscape and their limitations when deciding on the approach and methodology for their research. Depending on the environment, the researcher has to analyse carefully the different options and alternatives that suit the particular environment; then decide on the appropriate methodology for the circumstances that are challenging the researcher, as this could have a significant impact on the research findings. Figure 3-1 below illustrates the research methodology components. The research model is read from right to left with each layer representing a component of the research methodology. The first layer covers the research philosophy underlying this study, namely Interpretivism. Interpretivism necessitates an inductive research approach; in this study, a case study research design was selected.

Yin (2014:16) asserts that case study research is a practical review of probing current events within a day-to-day environment. The fourth layer contains the method applied for this study, which is the multi method. Meaning the researcher utilised both semi-structured interviews as well perusing company specific documents relating to the study at hand. The study represents a moment in time, and for that reason it is a cross sectional study. The sixth and final layer contains the techniques and procedures that were used in the execution of this study. These components are discussed in detail by the researcher in this section explaining what they are, what was utilised and how it is applied to this study.

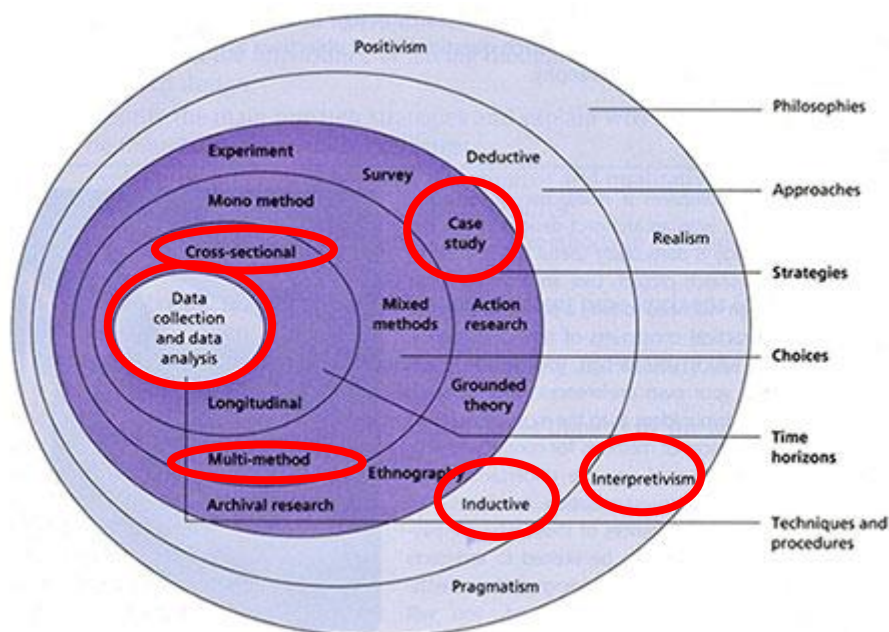


Figure 3-1: Research Methodology Components
(Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill, 2009:138)

3.2 Research Philosophy and Approach

A research paradigm consists of research methods as well as research philosophies as listed in Figure 3-1 above. This pattern affords the researcher an opportunity to cultivate the knowledge and insight about the research topic. It is a critical aspect of a research methodology in order to ensure the success of data collection (Williams, 2011). Interpretivism is the research philosophy underlying this study. Interpretivism necessitates an inductive research approach; in this study, a case study research design was applied.

The researcher approaches an interview with an ideology of what knowledge is, what is knowable and how society can engage about gaining knowledge. However, the role of the researcher is to analyse, decide and be in a position to transcend the global impressions regarding the research to society (Guba and Lincoln, 1994:108).

Cooper and Schindler (2014:144) and Yin (2014:4) concur that the qualitative research method is most commonly used for exploratory research studies. This method is ideal where researchers lack a clear understanding of the issues to be encountered during the study. A qualitative study allows the researcher to gain a better understanding of the concepts at hand and contribute to an improved research design through an inductive reasoning approach. Bluhm, Harman, Lee and Mitchel (2011:1870) concur by mentioning that qualitative research is important for understanding detailed systems within people and companies and how these systems evolve over time. They further opine that qualitative research is important to gather what people encounter and how they construe these encounters. Miles, *et al.*, (2014:9) agree and express that qualitative research is performed via a concentrated and lengthy process with participants in a normal environment. With the researcher, exploring issues relating to companies, people and civilisation in general. Tracy (2012:3) complements this by stating that qualitative research is about engaging yourself and finding the underlying cause of what you are trying to figure out or understand.

Nicholls (2009a:531) is of the same mind and states that inductive reasoning is a trait of qualitative research. Nicholls, (2009a:531) states that inductive reasoning commences from an insignificant perspective with the significance and comprehension of this perspective coming to the forefront as the process evolves. The researcher utilised case study research, which required inductive reasoning. Eisenhardt (1989:547) asserts that developing theory from case studies is an inductive or bottom up approach and the unique case data characteristics inform the level of theory generalisability. According to Nicholls (2009a:531) the significance is underpinned by the development of theory regarding the concepts under review, which is the ultimate goal of the

inductive reasoning process. Corner (1991:719) concurs and is of the view that qualitative research scrutinises facts relative to its setting and thereby develops theory. The section that follows describes the case study research method utilised for this research.

3.3 Case Study Research

The researcher utilised the case study research method for this study. Yin (2014:16) segregates the definition of case study research into two specific components. Firstly, Yin (2014:16) defines case study research as a practical review that probes a current event within a day-to-day environment, when the limitations between the event and environment are not well defined. In the second component, Yin (2014:16) states that the case study review manages the unique scenario where there will be multiple variables of concern and information facts to be considered with a desired outcome. Yin (2014:17) is also of the view that case study research is dependent on numerous foundations of proof and profits from previous literature development to direct the data gathering and evaluation stages.

Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007:25) cite that case study research is the pivotal point from which to develop theory via inductive reasoning. They stipulate that theory be derived from the methodical analysis of the concepts under review within and between cases. The researcher studied multiple cases based on a purposive sampling technique. Miles, *et al.*, (2014:33) and Yin (2014:57) emphasises that multiple case studies earn more credibility than a single case study. The findings from a single case study can be construed as exceptional or rare. The findings from multiple case studies remove this criticism. Yin (2014:19) further states that the researcher should follow organised processes and procedures when conducting the study as this will add consistency to the case study research methodology.

Chesebro and Borisoff (2007:4) complements this by stating that all qualitative research has mutual qualities. They are of the opinion that natural settings, with the participant researcher, can occur. The communication is subject based in which the participants are allowed to interchange between concepts

and freely share information. Corner (1991:719) complements this and mentions that the aim of qualitative research is not to control participants. Its aim is to seek information from a normal and acquainted setting in order to comprehend what people are doing. Lastly the results provided, give us insight into the concepts under review that may contribute to, addresses a current issue or add to the literature in progress (Chesebro and Borisoff, 2007:5). Yin (2014:4) agrees that case study research is ideal for contributing to the education of communities, companies, the political sphere and society in general. He is of the view that case study research affords researchers an opportunity to understand the complete and important qualities of leadership processes. The section that follows discusses the case selection approach.

3.4 Population

Eisenhardt (1989:537) states, “The concept of a population is crucial, because the population defines the set of entities from which the research sample is to be drawn. Also, selection of an appropriate population controls extraneous variation and helps to define the limits of generalising the findings”. According to Gibbs, Kealy, Willis, Green, Welch and Daly (2007:541) the researcher’s theoretical context of the concepts under review informs the researcher’s preliminary sampling choice. They are of the opinion that this should be an iterative process that should be continuously evaluated until finalisation of the sample choice. The researcher utilised a non-probability sample, which is based on the concept of non-random selection. Therefore, purposive sampling was used to ensure that the participants fitting the set criteria were reached (Cooper and Schindler, 2014:359 and Miles, *et al.*, 2014:31). Gibbs, *et al.*, (2007:542) are of the view that a directed sample range is a forte of qualitative sampling and allows the researcher to better grasp the problem statement.

Nicholls (2009b:639), Harding (2013:17) and Tracy (2012:134) allude to this by stating that qualitative researchers envisage a sample the requires participants to be in a position that could provide a telling awareness of the concepts under review. Harding (2013:17) mentions that purposive sampling is prone to bias hence the researcher should meticulously explain the impact on the research and the process of ensuring validity. Miles, *et al.*, (2014)

provides methods to combat this bias and is explained in chapter four of this document pertaining to the research findings.

Eisenhardt (1989:545) and Miles, *et al.*, (2014:34) state that there is no set number of cases to be studied. However, Eisenhardt (1989:545) express that between four and ten cases are usually ideal. When utilising less than four cases theory building becomes challenging. Utilising in excess of 10 cases results in large quantities of data and intricacy in analysis according to (Eisenhardt 1989:545 and Miles, *et al.*, 2014:34). Miles, *et al.*, (2014:34) concurs and expresses that they have reviewed numerous qualitative studies that contrasted four cases or less but the findings could not emphasise generalisability. Eisenhardt (1989:546 and 1991) and Miles, *et al.*, (2014:31) accentuate that studying numerous cases is a robust manner in which to build theory from cases. They are of the opinion that studying several cases allows for repeatability. Eisenhardt (1991:620) emphasise that numerous cases often accentuate corresponding facets of an occurrence and by analysing these facets, the researcher is able to obtain a better understanding of the ultimate theory pursued.

The target population were the telecommunications companies within South Africa. This industry is under pressure from regulators and shareholders. Hence the question is often posed if the organisations within this industry are able to execute their strategies effectively within the pressurised environment as described in the industry of study see (§ 1.3) and the problem statement see (§ 1.4). With the unit of observation being the respective cases. The researcher selected four companies that utilise the project management discipline when executing a strategy. The researcher interviewed participants who are involved or are accountable for executing a strategy. This aligns to the purposive sampling that aims at ensuring that the participants fit the set criteria for the study (Cooper and Schindler, 2014:359 and Miles, *et al.*, 2014:31).

The designing of instruments and procedures are discussed in the section that follows.

3.5 Designing Instruments and Procedures

Eisenhardt (1989:534) asserts that researchers in pursuit of building theory normally utilise multiple data collection techniques such as document analysis, observations and interviews. Eisenhardt (1989:537) further notes that while these techniques are generic, inductive researchers are not limited to these techniques and may only utilise specific techniques. Semi structured face-to-face interviews were utilised for data collection during this research. The researcher conducted four interviews per case in Cases A, B and C and 3 interviews in Case D. The interviews were conducted with senior members of the organisations directly responsible for strategy execution. Nicholls (2009b:639) and Tracy (2012:138) believe that quality is more essential than quantity with qualitative research interviews. She recommends five to eight interviews per case as “pedagogically valuable”.

Nicholls (2009b:639) and Tracy (2012:138) accentuates that the number of interviews to be conducted depends on the quality of the data gathered. Tracy (2012:138) is of the view that finances and the time available for data gathering also influence the number of interviews to be conducted. However, the fifteen interviews conducted provided sufficient information for the purpose of this study. According to Gibbs, *et al.*, (2007:542) saturation is reached when the data gathering reveals no different information and is repetitive. This is deemed a feasible point to stop interviews within a case. In addition to this, organisational documents were elicited by the researcher as an additional data collection method. The researcher reviewed these documents and obtained additional information pertaining to strategy execution.

With this in mind, Turner III (2010:754) asserts that designing effective research interview questions for the data collection process is one of the most important facets of the interview design. Mcnamara (2009) and Tracy (2012:145) state that meaningful research questions for interviews should contain the following components.

- Wording should be open-ended and should avoid eliciting yes and no answers. This will allow participants to revert in a manner they see fit.

- Questions should be as neutral as possible. This will avoid prejudicial impressions.
- Questions should be asked one at a time. This will allow the participant to focus on the question at hand.
- Questions should be worded clearly.
- Be careful of asking why questions. This may infer causal relationships and the participants might not be comfortable defending their responses. Uphold rather than threaten the interviewer's position.
- Have adequate follow up questions by asking for examples.

Based on the above-mentioned guideline provided by Mcnamara (2009) and Tracy (2012:145) the researcher developed an interview guide see (§ Appendix 1). Tracy (2012:143) believes that interview guides are less formalised than structured interview schedules and are designed for flexibly. Mcnamara (2009) complements this by asserting that the interview guide allows more focus than the conversational approach while simultaneously tolerating autonomy and malleability in eliciting information. The questions within the interview guide were grouped as opening, generative, directive and closing questions (Tracy 2012:146). Furthermore, the qualitative interview questions were aligned with the research problem statement, research question and the conceptual framework which was developed and discussed in Figure 2.3 see (§2.8) from the literature review as illustrated in Table 3-1 below to ensure traceability and alignment.

In order to ensure that an appropriate instrument was utilised the researcher reviewed the case interview guide after the initial interviews in relation to the responses received. The researcher found that the responses were in line with the objectives of the study. According to Cooper and Schindler (2014:324) researchers pre-test, the measuring instrument during the infancy stages of the research. This allows the researcher to replicate the processes and procedures being utilised for the research (Collins, 2003:230; Cooper and Schindler, 2014:324). Collins (2003:230) and Cooper and Schindler (2014:324) assert that this allows the researcher to address any issues

pertaining to the processes and instrument. It enables the researcher time to modify the processes and procedures if required in preparation for the main study in order to reduce the chance of collecting inconsistent data. However, this was not required as the instrument was deemed appropriate based on the initial responses. The interview guide was availed to the participants 4 weeks before the interview. This allowed the participant's time to prepare for the interviews.

Miles, *et al.*, (2014:39) argue that an authenticated questionnaire should be used in the interview process as it would be advisable to use an instrument that has previously been validated in other studies, therefore ensuring the validity questions to be asked. They are of the view that reciprocal instruments are required to develop theory, advance reasoning and to make proposals or else the research will be dissimilar and accurate comparison will not be possible. Furthermore, they state that it will remove any doubt to its reliability and validity. However, due to the lack of academic literature regarding the concepts under review the researcher designed a new interview guide with a new set of qualitative interview questions for this research.

Table 3-1 illustrates the problem statement, research question as well as the interview guide questions traceable to the project management based strategy execution conceptual framework see (§ Figure 2-3). The literature review references to the interview guide questions have been included below each question in Table 3-1. Introductory questions such as interviewee background, role within the organisation as well as experience and qualifications to establish rapport are also included in the interview guide. These have not been included in the table below as the questions below pertain to the literature review traceability. The research methodology applied is crucial to ensuring that the traceability between these components are achieved.

Table 3-1: Research Traceability

Problem Statement	Research Question	Interview Guide Questions	Strategy Execution PM Based Conceptual Framework Traceability
<p>The role of project management as a discipline for executing strategy within the corporate environment in SA has not been sufficiently investigated. Hence, the purpose of the research is to provide answers to this dilemma.</p>	<p>How is the project management discipline utilised in executing strategies within the South African telecommunications environment?</p>	<p>What particular process or methodology is being followed to execute your strategy?</p> <p>(Kwak and Anbari, 2009; Mir and Pinnington, 2013).</p>	<p>Project Management Application Revised Organisational Architecture</p>
		<p>What tools and techniques do you currently utilise to execute your strategy? E.g., project management.</p> <p>(Kwak and Anbari, 2009; Mir and Pinnington, 2013).</p>	<p>Project Management Application Revised Organisational Architecture</p>
		<p>What project management discipline is being utilised within your organisation?</p> <p>(Kwak and Anbari, 2009; Mir and Pinnington, 2013).</p>	<p>Project Management Application Revised Organisational Architecture</p>
		<p>How is the project management discipline being utilised within your end to end strategic management process?</p> <p>(Karra, 2008; Alsudiri, Al-Karaghoul, and Eldabi, 2013).</p>	<p>Project Management as an enabler for strategy execution</p>
		<p>How is the project management discipline being utilised to execute your strategy?</p> <p>(Young, <i>et al.</i>, 2012; Young and Grant, 2014).</p>	<p>Project Management Application Revised Organisational Architecture</p>
		<p>What is the level of maturity regarding the project management discipline being utilised?</p> <p>(Karra, 2008; Young, <i>et al.</i>, 2012; Young and Grant, 2014).</p>	<p>Project Management Application Revised Organisational Architecture</p>
		<p>What is the level of maturity regarding the tools and techniques being utilised?</p> <p>(Karra, 2008; Young, <i>et al.</i>, 2012; Young and Grant, 2014).</p>	<p>Project Management Application Revised Organisational Architecture</p>
		<p>How is the appropriateness of the discipline as well as the tools and techniques being utilised to execute your strategy assessed?</p> <p>(Karra, 2008; Young, <i>et al.</i>, 2012; Young and Grant, 2014).</p>	<p>Project Management Application Revised Organisational Architecture</p>
		<p>What are the challenges or issues you have with the tools and techniques being applied?</p> <p>(Karra, 2008; Young, <i>et al.</i>, 2012; Young and Grant, 2014).</p>	<p>Project Management Application Revised Organisational Architecture</p>
		<p>What type of investment has your organisation made regarding the project management discipline?</p> <p>(Young, <i>et al.</i>, 2012; Young and Grant, 2014).</p>	<p>Project Management Application Revised Organisational Architecture</p>
		<p>What type of project management governance do you have in place?</p>	<p>Project Management Application</p>

Problem Statement	Research Question	Interview Guide Questions	Strategy Execution PM Based Conceptual Framework Traceability
		(Lee, Venter and Bates, 2004; Louw and Venter, 2010).	Revised Organisational Architecture
		Where is the project management office (PMO) placed within the organisation? (Lee, Venter and Bates, 2004; Louw and Venter, 2010).	Project Management Application Revised Organisational Architecture
		Where is the project management centre of excellence in placed within your organisation? (Lee, Venter and Bates, 2004; Louw and Venter, 2010).	Project Management Application Revised Organisational Architecture
		How is strategy execution governed? (Lee, Venter and Bates, 2004; Olson, Slater and Hult, 2005; Louw and Venter, 2010).	Revised Organisational Architecture
		From an industry perspective what are the threats to successful strategy execution in your mind? (Hrebiniak, 2006; Cocks, 2010 and Thompson, <i>et al.</i> , 2010).	Strategic Direction Project Management Application Revised Organisational Architecture
		What role does organisational architecture play in strategy execution? (Lee, Venter and Bates, 2004; Louw and Venter, 2010).	Revised Organisational Architecture
		What about the staff executing the strategy? Do you believe they have the appropriate skills? (Lee, Venter and Bates, 2004; Louw and Venter, 2010).	Revised Organisational Architecture
		Which department is responsible for strategy execution? (Lee, Venter and Bates, 2004; Olson, Slater and Hult, 2005; Louw and Venter, 2010).	Revised Organisational Architecture
		What role does change management play when executing your strategy? (Hrebiniak, 2006; Lepsinger, 2011; Salih and Doll, 2013).	Revised Organisational Architecture
		In your mind what would be integral to successful strategy execution? (Hrebiniak, 2006; Thompson, <i>et al.</i> , 2010 and Cocks, 2010).	Strategic Direction Project Management Application Revised Organisational Architecture
		What is your project or initiative selection approach? (Morgan, <i>et al.</i> , 2007; Thompson, <i>et al.</i> , 2007; Franken, <i>et al.</i> , 2009 and MacLennan, 2011).	Identification of Projects Selection of Projects
		How does the process of the selection of strategic initiatives or projects influence strategy execution? (Morgan, <i>et al.</i> , 2007; Thompson, <i>et al.</i> , 2007; Franken, <i>et al.</i> , 2009 and MacLennan, 2011).	Identification of Projects Selection of Projects

Problem Statement	Research Question	Interview Guide Questions	Strategy Execution PM Based Conceptual Framework Traceability
		How are projects operationalised once completed? (Thompson, <i>et al.</i> , 2010 and Cocks, 2010).	Project Management Application Revised Organisational Architecture

Additional instruments that were designed are the interview schedule see (§ Appendix 2). The interview schedule outlines the date and time of the interviews. No follow up or additional interviews were required. A case analysis meeting form see (§ Appendix 3) was utilised to reflect on each interview and was completed after the interview to summarise the interview (Miles, *et al.*, 2014:128). A document list form (see § Appendix 4) was utilised in order to record the name and description of document for the additional documentation provided to the researcher. The detailed case analysis is discussed in the data analysis section see (§ chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7).

3.6 Data Collection

The data gathered in this research study is qualitative in nature. The researcher scheduled semi-structured face-to-face interviews with purposively selected participants. Parallel to this, organisational documents were sourced by the researcher for scrutiny and utilisation as an additional data collection method. All the interviews were electronically recorded and professionally transcribed in preparation for the data analysis phase.

3.6.1 Semi-structured Interviews

Nicholls (2009b:640) and Harding (2013:31) are of the opinion that semi-structured interviews are more frequently being utilised in qualitative research than structured interviews. They are of the view that even though the interview is focused on pre-determined concepts and questions, the semi-structured approach allows participants to share additional information as deemed necessary by the researcher.

Harding (2013:30), Tracy (2012:132) and Eisenhardt (1989:539) complement this by stating that face-to-face interactions afford the researcher a chance to heed the opinions or knowledge of the participants for a sustained period and

allows the researcher to ask exploratory questions. Furthermore, Eisenhardt (1989:539) accentuates that a benefit of building theory from case research is the ability to effect changes during the data gathering process. These changes afford the researcher an opportunity to investigate developing matters as they arise during the setting. Eisenhardt (1989:539) refers to this situation as “controlled opportunism in which researchers take advantage of the uniqueness in a specific case and the emergence of new themes to improve resultant theory”.

Eisenhardt (1989:539) and Miles, *et al.*, (2014:71) mention that field notes are important and that these provide a perpetual record of how the research is actually unfolding out in the field. Eisenhardt (1989:539) states that field notes are essential to document reactions as it is difficult to determine what could be utilised or referenced at a later stage as the research progresses. Eisenhardt (1989:539) mentions that it is important to reference these field notes to stimulate thinking for the improvement and benefit of the research learnings. According to Eisenhardt (1989:538) by simultaneously gathering and examining the data, the researcher is able to begin a premature attempt at data analysis. All the interviews were recorded electronically and transcribed in order to ensure that the researcher had a precise record of the interview. This provided input to the data analysis phase that is described as follows in (§ 3.7).

3.6.2 Reviewing Organisational Documents

Bowen (2009:27) states that document analysis is a logical process used to analyse electronic and printed documentation and that words are gathered from sources like the minutes of meetings, observations, papers and additional items. By collecting and analysing data in this manner, the researcher was able to interpret the meaning of these documents methodically.

Organisational documents such as organisational structures and operating model documents were requested by the researcher for review and analysis as an additional method of data collection. A document list form see

(§ Appendix 4) was be used to record the name and description of the document. This afforded the researcher ease of reference during the analysis of these documents.

According to Gibbs, *et al.*, (2007:542) alternative methods of data gathering should be utilised in circumstances where the problem statement becomes challenging to comprehend. Because the researcher did not experience any challenges with the problem statement, the above-mentioned aspects were not required in this study.

3.7 Data Analysis

Tracy (2012:185), Miles, *et al.*, (2014:70) and Yin (2014:132) highlights that before data analysis can commence the data has to be prepared as it will not be available instantaneously for review. According Tracy (2012:186) and Yin (2014:132) for the researcher to obtain optimal benefits from the data analysis they recommend that the researcher methodically arranges and sets up the data to be analysed

According Gibbs, *et al.*, (2007:542) the data analysis commences with the primary collection of information. Nicholls (2009b:644), Tracy (2012:186) and Miles, *et al.*, (2014:71) state that once the data is gathered the researcher will categorise the data according to the themes identified. Patterns and trends will be identified and analysed which will ultimately lead to illustrative guidelines.

This approach concurs with what Flick, von Kardoff and Steinke (2004:3) express that the analytical methods utilised for the interviews within the ambit of a study should depend on the questions being posed and the methodology followed. Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007:25) adds to the above-mentioned opinion by stating that when developing theory from case study research it is important to explain why inductive approach is more suited to address the research question than the deductive method.

Miles, *et al.*, (2014:12) views qualitative data analysis as a parallel occurrence of three actions, namely data condensation, data display, drawing and verifying conclusions. Data condensation refers to simplifying the data collected from the data collection methods applied for detailed analysis. They further state that this will apply rigour to the data analysis process that will lend credibility to the findings.

Miles, *et al.*, (2014:12) refer to data display as the presentation of data in a structured manner. They express that this allows the researcher to comprehend what is transpiring and follow a desired course of action. Tracy (2012:186) is of the same opinion and states that if data is arranged in a specific manner it motivates the researcher to review the data in a proportional manner that will assist the analysis. The final component according to Miles, *et al.*, (2014:13) is drawing and verifying of conclusions. They mention that here the researcher infers and stipulates what the research reveals. In order to add credibility, the researcher should verify these findings with an appropriate method. They conclude by reiterating that these three components should be reviewed collectively as qualitative data analysis.

An appropriate qualitative analysis method such as content analysis was used to analyse and interpret data. Hsieh and Shannon (2005:1277) mentions that content analysis is frequently utilised during qualitative research analysis. They further state that there are three types of content analysis namely the conventional, directed and summative types. They are of the view that the coding schemes, origins of code and threats to trustworthiness differentiates these approaches. "With a directed approach, analysis starts with a theory or relevant research findings as guidance for initial codes. A summative content analysis involves counting and comparisons, usually of keywords or content, followed by the interpretation of the underlying context" (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005:1277). However, the conventional content analysis approach was applied to the data analysis in this study. They further mention that the conventional approach is often applied with a research methodology intending to be descriptive of a phenomenon and where limited literature is available on

the subject. A further trait of the conventional approach is that coding themes will stem straight from the data collected (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005:1277).

Elo and Kyngäs (2008) state that content analysis is a method applied to qualitative or quantitative data for inductive or deductive analysis. Content analysis was applied in an inductive manner for this qualitative study that is consistent with the research philosophy discussed in (§ 3.2) of this study, which utilises an inductive reasoning approach. Elo and Kyngäs (2008) assert that the purpose of content analysis is to engineer a model to explain the concepts under study in a theoretical manner. Elo and Kyngäs (2008) and Tracy (2012:184) mention that content analysis for qualitative data analysis comprises of three phases. Namely, preparation, organising and reporting of the data.

3.7.1 Coding

Cooper and Schindler (2014:379) and Tracy (2012:186) emphasise that coding entails the allocation of figures and codes to replies in order for these replies to be aggregated into a few classifications. Coding enables the researcher to rationalise numerous replies to a limited number of categories having the important information required for data analysis (Cooper and Schindler, 2014:379). Elo and Kyngäs (2008) is of the view that once the inductive content analysis approach is selected by the researcher in order to organise the data it then involves “open coding, creating categories and abstraction”.

3.7.1.1 Initial Coding

The researcher utilised the ATLAS.ti software package for the entire qualitative analysis process. The initial coding phase commenced with the utilisation of the ATLAS.ti software package. Elo and Kyngäs (2008) and Tracy (2012:189) are of the opinion that initial coding commences by studying the data and allocating words that encapsulate the meaning of the data reviewed. Appendix 10 contains a list of quotations per code. Company and participant names were masked to avoid any ethical transgressions. Elo and

Kyngäs (2008) and Tracy (2012:189) further mention that the data is reviewed and coded numerous times during the initial coding phase.

According to Cooper and Schindler (2014:380) and Elo and Kyngäs (2008) it is recommended that the researcher generates a codebook containing a list and a description of each code that will be utilised during the content analysis phase. They are of the opinion that a codebook allows the researcher to control the data analysis process and provides a logical analysis approach that will aid reliability in the data analysis. The researcher created a codebook see (§ Appendix 6) as well as following the initial coding guidelines during content analysis for this study. In addition to this the codebook also contains the within case analysis and cross-case analysis code groupings.

3.7.1.2 Secondary Coding

According to Elo and Kyngäs (2008) and (Tracy, 2012:194) during the secondary coding stage the researcher analyses the codes determined during the initial coding phase and starts to arrange and classify them into explanatory and informative ideas. The secondary level coding consists of analysis, trend recognition as well as determining causal relationships among the data being analysed (Elo and Kyngäs, 2008 and Tracy, 2012:194). This was achieved by utilising the initial level coding together with analytical transformation as well as an application of the theory (Tracy, 2012:194).

The codes for the cross-case analysis were developed by combining the codes utilised during the within case analysis. This allowed the researcher to create fewer and more meaningful codes for discussion and analysis. Appendix 6 illustrates how these codes have been combined.

Tracy (2012:196) recommends that researchers keep account of their analysis and opinions during the coding process. It is known as a methods draft form. This allows the researcher to revert to these opinions and not lose track of the ideas during coding (Tracy, 2012:196). The researcher utilised a coding analysis memorandum see (§ Appendix 7). It is similar to the methods draft form as advised by Tracy (2012:196) to record the analysis detail during the

coding process and it serves to describe the data analysis process. This form contains a date and a description of what analysis was performed (Tracy, 2012:196).

During the data analysis process, the researcher evolved from the initial and explanatory coding to intensive and methodical coding. The researcher gained an improved comprehension of how the data analysis addresses the research question. In so doing, the researcher addressed any misalignment by determining if additional data analysis was required through the comparison of the research question to the data analysis outcome (Tracy, 2012:195; Cooper and Schindler, 2014:406). The researcher developed themes during this coding cycle. The ATLAS.ti software package was utilised for the creation of the themes. Tracy (2012:194) expresses that the development of themes is another technique in which the researcher can interpret the data and associate it to the nascent meanings.

3.7.2 Case Analysis

Eisenhardt (1989:539) emphasises that data analysis is critical to developing theory from case study research as well as being complex. Eisenhardt (1989:540) believe that there are important elements that can be applied when analysing case study data.

The researcher utilised within case analysis as well as cross-case analysis. Eisenhardt (1989:540) is of the mind that within case analysis deals with the large volumes of data, which is synonymous with case study research. Case analysis constitutes the detailed narratives of each instance. The purpose of within case analysis is for the researcher to become acquainted with the details of each case according to (Eisenhardt, 1989:540 and Miles, *et al.*, 2014:100). In doing so, the researcher has an opportunity to identify trends at an early stage as well as commence with thinking pertaining to cross-case referencing and analysis (Eisenhardt, 1989:540).

The within case analysis approach allowed the researcher to apply cross-case analysis. Eisenhardt (1989:540) comments that classifications can be selected

by the researcher or will be highlighted by the literature review. The researcher could then utilise these classifications as a basis for commencing the cross-case analysis. The researcher utilised sets of cases and documented the parallels and contrasts between these cases. This analysis could reveal additional data that could benefit the study. Miles, *et al.*, (2014:101) believe that cross-case analysis augments the generalisability of the findings. They express that a pivotal motive of cross-case analysis is that it allows for an in-depth comprehension and rationalisation of the study. Eisenhardt (1989:541) and Miles *et al.*, (2014:101) declare that the purpose of cross-case analysis is for researchers to transcend boundaries by applying an organised methodology to the data being analysed for the benefit of the study.

An adaptation of the Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA) technique was utilised for the cross-case analysis only. The reason being that the researcher only became aware of this technique after all the interviews with the participants were completed. Northcutt and McCoy (2004) state that an IQA study allows the focus group to develop their unique explanations for the concepts under study. Five available members across all the cases were invited to the focus group session. They attended and participated in the study. The focus group utilised the codes developed by the researcher to produce the themes for the cross-case analysis. Northcutt and McCoy (2004:46) state that constituents are a group of people who have a common understanding of the phenomenon and are chosen as a result of their power over and distance from the phenomenon being studied. "Interactive Qualitative Analysis presumes that knowledge and power are largely dependent" (Northcutt & McCoy 2004:16). The constituents were selected because they possess knowledge of the phenomenon being studied.

The researcher printed all the codes and randomly placed this on a board. The participants then grouped the codes as they deemed fit. Thereafter they developed the theme names as per the groupings. The participants were then tasked to independently determine the interrelationships between the themes also known as affinities in terms of IQA. They were presented with an affinity relationship table printed form compiled by the researcher see (§ Appendix 8).

This form contained the affinities or themes produced by the focus group without any arrows indicating relationships. All possible combinations were listed. Once completed by the participants the results were collated to produce a consolidated tabular affinity interrelationship diagram see (§ Appendix 9).

A system influence diagram (SID) pertaining to the themes was produced utilising the consolidated tabular affinity interrelationship diagram developed by the focus group. Northcutt and McCoy (2004) defines a SID as a visual mind map of the system influencers and outcomes. The SID assignments namely the primary driver, secondary driver, pivots and primary outcome were also defined as a product of the affinity interrelationship table. This SID is then utilised in the discussion of findings see (§ chapter 8).

3.8 Trustworthiness

The conditions for trustworthiness in qualitative research is meticulously related to the paradigmatic foundations of the actual discipline in which the specific research is performed (Morrow, 2005:250). Furthermore, Miles, *et al.*, (2014:42) expresses that with qualitative research, concerns with instrument validity and reliability is very much dependent on the expertise of the researcher. “Essentially a person is observing, interviewing and recording, while modifying the observations, from one field visit to the next. How valid and reliable is this person likely to be as an information gathering instrument”.

Miles, *et al.*, (2014:42) emphasises that a knowledgeable researcher is often a better research instrument and provides the following guidelines in terms of what will constitute an adequate qualitative researcher as an instrument. The researcher must be “familiar with the phenomenon and the setting under study. Follow a multidiscipline approach as opposed to a narrow grounding or focus in a single discipline. The researcher should have good investigative skills, the ability to draw people out, and have meticulous attention to detail. Be comfortable, resilient, and non-judgemental with participants in the setting. Possess a heightened sense of empathetic engagement, balanced with a heightened sense of objective awareness.”

Shenton (2004:63) states that even though detractors are loath to accede to the trustworthiness of qualitative research, frameworks for certifying rigour have been present for some time. Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommends addressing four areas namely credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability in the quest for a trustworthy qualitative research.

3.8.1 Credibility

According to Shenton (2004:63) credibility poses the question, is the research measuring what it is intending to measure. It is about establishing if the findings of the study are a reflection of the reality. Morrow (2005:252) mentions that “credibility can be achieved by prolonged engagement with participants, persistent observation in the field, the use of peer de-briefers or peer researchers, negative case analysis, researcher reflexivity and participant checks. Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007:27) argues that interviewing knowledgeable participants with greater experience regarding the concepts under review would aid the credibility.

Shenton (2004:64) and Miles, *et al.*, (2014:313) also recommends activities to be adopted that will aid the credibility of the research findings. The researcher adopted the following recommended activities as referred to by (Morrow, 2005:252).

- Context-rich, meaningful and thick descriptions are provided
- Adopting well established research methods
- Negative case analysis is elicited and accounted for in the findings
- Rival explanations are addressed
- Data presented are linked to the categories and prior or emerging theory
- Findings are clearly and systematically related
- Areas of uncertainty are identified and addressed
- Iterative questioning is applied

3.8.2 Transferability

We need to be aware if the findings of a qualitative case study can be applied to a greater population (Shenton, 2004:69; Morrow, 2005:252 and Miles, *et al.*, 2014:314). Lincoln and Guba (1985:124) believe that it is the duty of the researcher to ensure that sufficient background information about the research sites are provided to enable the reader to infer transferability regarding the research findings. Morrow (2005:252) asserts that transferability is accomplished when the researcher reveals adequate details about the researcher as an instrument, procedures and the sample. In order to fulfil transferability requirements, the researcher applied the activities recommended by (Miles, *et al.*, 2014:314).

- The findings include sufficient descriptions for readers to assess the transferability prospects
- The processes and outcomes are described in the findings for further utilisation in other areas
- The findings are compared to prior or emergent theory
- Theories and their transferability are stated
- The case selection characteristics are described in detail to ensure that it can be compared with other samples

3.8.3 Dependability

Shenton (2004:71), Morrow (2005:252) and Miles, *et al.*, (2014:312) are of the opinion that dependability addresses the issue of process consistency. They state that the way in which the study is conducted should be consistent over time, researchers and analytical techniques. “The process through which findings are derived should be explicit and repeatable as much as possible” (Morrow, 2005:252). Dependability is achieved by following the evolving research design, providing a comprehensive audit trail of the research events, activities, procedures, data gathering, data analysis, emerging themes, theory’s and other research documentation (Shenton, 2004:71 and Morrow, 2005:252).

3.8.4 Confirmability

“Confirmability is concerned with establishing the extent to which the data and interpretations of enquiry can be confirmed by others who read or review the research results and establish that they are not a function of a researcher’s imagination’ (McCoy, 2012:127). Confirmability is centred on the notion that the truthfulness of the findings is dependent on the data and it is the researcher’s responsibility to link the findings, data and procedures in a manner for the reader to confirm the findings (Morrow, 2005:252).

Confirmability is addressed by clearly describing the study’s techniques and processes in detail, findings are traceable to the display of data, a detailed record of the study’s processes and procedures are provided and the retention details of all data for reanalysis by fellow researchers are provided (Miles, *et al.*, 2014:311). The researcher stored all the data on multiple devices that have an audit trail and it is password controlled. Details of the location has also been provided. The section that follows discusses the ethical considerations.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The researcher applied for and received an ethic clearance certificate from the University of South Africa before commencing the data collection. The ethics clearance reference number is 2016_SBL/DBL_027_FA.

Researchers should not solely concentrate on the knowledge their research will be yielding. They must be cognisant of the potential harm they could inflict on the participants, institutions, colleagues and the greater society. Therefore, all researchers must be directed by the classic principle of humane conduct, first, do no harm (Miles, *et al.*, 2014:56). The researcher upheld the ‘do no harm’ principle.

Even though no material ethical issues were experienced during this study. Informed consent to commence the study was obtained from senior executives within the cases selected. The researcher emailed the executives

a detailed description regarding the purpose of the study and the anticipated timeframe on an official University of South Africa letterhead. The researcher presented a curriculum vitae of the researcher to participants. This allowed the participants to have a complete view of the researchers academic and work experience.

Participants were presented with an agreement clarifying the rules of engagement regarding the study see (§ Appendix 5). It included processes that would be followed, data management and ownership, utilisation of findings and research integrity. Participants had an opportunity to comment, pose questions and address any uncertainties. Once this discussion was concluded the researcher furnished the participants with an updated copy of the agreed upon rules of engagement. With the unforeseen nature of qualitative research, the rules of engagement were continuously reviewed and updated (Miles, *et al.*, 2014:56), because the cases selected were different organisations within the same industry. The researcher offered to sign a non-disclosure agreement. This was welcomed by the executives however, this was not enforced by the organisations due to the generic nature of the study.

The researcher maintained objectivity by applying rigour to the qualitative research process through the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of the research.

3.10 Conclusion

Researchers have to be aware of their research landscape and their limitations when deciding on the approach and methodology for their research. The reason being that methodology is crucial when conducting research. After assessing the environment, the researcher analysed the different options and alternatives that suited this particular environment. The researcher then decided on the methodology described in this chapter for the circumstances as this could have a significant impact on the research results. The chapters that follow introduces the within and cross-case analysis as well as the research findings based on the analysis conducted.

Chapter 4 : Within Case Analysis - Case A

This chapter provides a detailed account of the within case analysis for Case A. The organisational background is provided thereafter the data production approach is discussed. In addition to this the respective themes are analysed and a conclusion of the within case analysis is provided.

4.1 Company Background

This organisation is a leading emerging markets mobile operator at the forefront of global technological changes. Their headquarters are in Johannesburg and they are delivering mobile and digital services to millions of customers across Africa and the Middle East (Integrated Report, 2016). This organisation is one of the operations within a group of companies. Participants in this case are employed by the South African operation. Hence, this case study is applicable to the South African operation.

In its 2016, Integrated Report (Integrated Report, 2016) the organisation states that some of the fundamental issues the organisation is experiencing is tough global economic conditions affecting the entire group. Another key issue is the disruption of its traditional telecommunications services and the increasing competition within South Africa. Based on the above-mentioned threats the organisation strives for continuous improvement. "Our strong brand, experience, technology and procedures and processes constitute our intellectual capital" (Integrated Report, 2016). With the telecoms industry landscape being transformed from a competitive perspective. The manner in which these organisations are able to execute their strategy effectively remains an interesting point of discussion.

4.2 Data Production Approach

The manner in which the data was collected and produced is discussed below.

4.2.1 Interviews

Due to the nature of the study, four senior project managers responsible for executing key strategic projects were interviewed at their organisations premises during the last quarter of 2016. The participant profiles are summarised in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1: Case A - Participant Profiles

#	Job Title	Description
1	Project Manager	This participant is a resource in the Information Systems (IS) environment. At this moment, this participant is dealing with various projects. It is non-IS related. This participant is also a Programme Support Manager on the information security programme. The participant has Matric and numerous certificates ranging from Technical, in the IS and Project Management Frameworks.
2	Project Manager	This participant has a B.Com Degree in Informatics and a Project Management Professional (PMP) qualification. This participant also has significant experience within the telecommunications industry across the entire value chain as a project manager.
3	Senior Project Manager	This participant is a senior project manager within the organisation. This participant possesses a wealth of experience within the telecommunications industry. This participant has a PMP Certification that alludes to her technical skills.
4	Senior Project Manager	This participant is a Senior Project Manager specifically an Information Systems Project Manager at this stage. The participant used to be a business Project Manager managing strategic projects. The participant comes from a top consulting firm in the Project Management field and has a certified PMP qualification.

4.2.2 Documentation

In addition the organisation's annual combined reports were reviewed for further information pertaining to this study. The participants were not comfortable in sharing any other documentation. They were of the opinion that these documents contain strategic sensitive information that could be a valuable source of information to competitors if availed in the public domain. This included process and procedure documentation. Below find, a table containing the list of documents reviewed.

Table 4-2: Case A - Document List

#	Name	Description
1	Combined Report 2015/2016	This report provides a detailed account to the stakeholders of its controls, strategy, and organisational performance for the financial year. Furthermore, it also provides a business outlook for the future.
2	Combined Report 2014/2015	The report provides a detailed account to the stakeholders of its controls, strategy, and organisational performance for the financial year. Furthermore, it also provides a business outlook for the future.

4.2.3 Observations

The participants were very comfortable being interviewed. They exhibited knowledge regarding the project management discipline and its purpose at a general level. The senior management team within this case were very new to the organisation and the participants were availed for the interviews based on their tenure and understanding of the processes within the organisation.

The section that follows discusses the themes identified within this case. Firstly, the process approach is analysed. Thereafter the way project selection is conducted is reviewed. The role of change management, organisational architecture and organisational capability is also addressed. Lastly, the conclusion summarises the findings within this case.

4.3 Process Approach

Governance in this context is referred to as oversight regarding the processes being followed. It is the specific processes regarding the role of project management during strategy execution for this particular case under review. Processes are in place within this case. The participants are conducting their daily operations according to set processes. The following processes are discussed below, namely corporate process ownership, project management and the strategy execution approach.

4.3.1 Corporate Process Ownership

This organisation has defined processes for strategy execution that are communicated to the organisation. This is evident from the manner in which this is emphasised by the participants. *“We do have a way of work, and the way of work is we do have a pack with flow diagrams which did not exist before” (11:1040-11:1154).* These processes are detailed through the entire value chain as mentioned: *“Well look, if you – here just also if you’ve got from the beginning from where you get your business case, you’ve got your business analyst (BA) that works on it and then you go and sit with your Solution Architect, and then you sit with all your stream owners, get all the input and then start building your process” (6:815-6:1117).*

The processes are dynamic and participants are allowed to adapt them based on the nature of the project being executed. This is accentuated as follows *“What I like about it is it’s a hybrid take, it’s where they take – it’s PRINCE, PMBOK, Agile and I’ve seen some things of SaFe 4.0 coming in as well. And where it is “hybridised” into what works” (4:723-4:946).* *I’ve seen ITIL in there as well, and they also allow you the freedom to build your own Hybrid Management System that is going to work for what project or programme you are in” (4:973-4:1148).*

Within this case, there are guidelines in terms of what processes to follow. However, these processes require a review for relevance in terms of the enterprise wide transformation the organisation is currently experiencing at

the time of conducting the interviews. This is indicated by the numerous concerns raised by the participants with the current way of work as stated here *“But now I’ve asked the question the other day, why did you scrap the scoping document, for instance. Now I am talking out, but why have you scrapped the scoping document? Some people called it a scoping document” and some calls it a “PDR,” Project Definition, and some people call it a “Charter.” And they said to me, but you’ve got the BA requirements” (15:769-15:1130).*

Due to the inconsistent process, being applied inconsistent information is being reported on as mentioned *“And another thing is the issue where the sanitisation of the feedback is up? Because they do not want to have a negative in their report. So they take the negative out and by the time this guy makes a decision it has been sanitised so badly that the decision that he had made is really a negative impact at the bottom, and it is not their fault” (19:1308-19:1662).*

From a business, perspective processes are in place and are currently being reviewed with a defined way of work in place the application of these processes is an area of concern that is not optimally performed.

4.3.2 Project Management Approach

A formal project management standard exists within this case. However, the standard is not strictly enforced. The standard is applied in conjunction with other standards not formally adopted by the organisation. This organisation utilises a diluted methodology as expressed, as *“I would say that we follow PMBOK” (3:1340-3:1378).* Another participant is of the view that, *“It’s not PRINCE, it is more PMBOK, it is a watered down version....” (7:526-7:580).* The participant continues, *“So you’ve got the freedom to hybridise what is going to work for your project” (10:1583-10:1662).*

The project management function within this case is currently decentralised with a centralised oversight function. This requires that the organisation consult all parties across the enterprise in order to ensure governance adherence. This is emphasised as follows *“Yes we’ve got PMO” (11:874-*

11:891). Another participant states *“Yes, we do have PMO”* (6:1483-6:1502). *“So I can say we do have one”* (12:667-12:697) *“And it is sitting within IS”* (12:807-12:834). From a project management perspective, this organisation has a project management standard that is applied dynamically. Within this case, the project management discipline is applied during both multiple phases as stated, *“It depends in which area. So, some areas only the execution and some areas the planning as well”* (5:657-5:753). It is agreed upon by a different participant *“and I think that will sort of take care of that upfront planning and whatever strategy and whatever else, and then it will move into obviously the “execution” part or whatever else”* (8:976-8:1160).

Further to this, the project governance is not adequately applied as stated *“In the Bank you had a long time to plan the strategies, and here you need to move it quick. And the guys were used to just implementing it, but if you look at the defects that came out because they didn’t follow project management methodology....”* (9:922-9:1190). The participant continues by mentioning that *“it costs you ten times more of the original solution with the project management involved would have been, because you had a professional that guided you through everything, that planned it correctly, that beforehand got the assumptions, the risks and the issues, because that is what they forget about”* (9:1638-9:2379).

Another participant mentions the lack of project governance by stating that *“because they come in and investigate after an issue that came out where Change Control wasn’t followed, or Change Control was followed and there was an issue. That means Problem Management can go and investigate the problem”* (23:821-23:1050). This is emphasised *“but I mean you get to a project, you want to implement the project and there is something that you’ve agreed but it has never been documented in the scoping document, and now the project is stuck because there is no proof. And you have no way of knowing in which direction to go now”* (16:630-16:922).

The management of strategy execution is examined in the section that follows.

4.3.3 Strategy Execution Approach

The participants in this case are responsible for key strategic projects within the organisation. They were aware that a formal strategy execution framework exists. They described the framework at a conceptual level. At the time of the interviews they indicated that the current framework is being reviewed for improvement.

They described the different levels of the structured strategy execution framework in the following manner. *“If you think about it, we’ve got Group and then we’ve got local. Group has got their things that they want but it is dependent on us to supply some of things....”* (18:1751-18:1939). The parent organisation then disseminates the strategy requirements to the local operation as commented *“Well if you look at it is you’ve got your Board doing their high levels, and then it gets pushed onto your Execs, your EOs and then they sit with their GMs. So he works his plan out, so then you unpack the high level from the Board, he breaks it down further as what he wants, the high level into his business stream and then he gives it to his GMs and they unpack it further, Senior Manager, Manager, Supervisor”* (19:347-19:768). This corporate process structure is outlined in Figure 4-1.

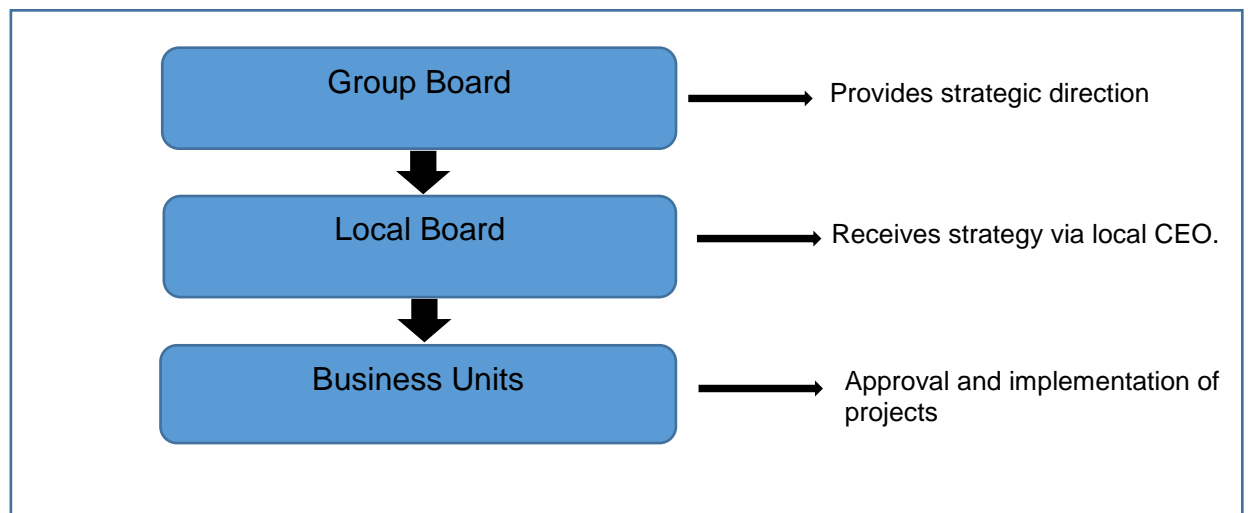


Figure 4-1: Case A - Strategy Execution Approach

Furthermore, there is continued awareness of improving the strategy execution framework as mentioned *“And also I think one of the moves here is, and I’ve just heard it, is the new Go to Market (GTM) process that they’re*

going to follow. So I think that GTM process will cover sort of what the business is currently lacking and it will just harness what they want to do I think” (8:843-8:1306).

However, concerns were raised regarding the strategic alignment of projects. *“Where in my mind I would say, you know, where there will be somebody looking at a project before it comes into the PMO and makes sure it is going to deliver towards the overall strategy of the company” (5:1013-5:1216).* Based on the above-mentioned comments the detailed strategy execution framework in place is not clear to the participants. Furthermore, this is causing uncertainty regarding the standard to be followed as mentioned below. *“At this point they seem to be working on a new process ... I’m not sure what it is based on, but it is specific to this organisations environment” (3:1102-3:1275).*

Within this case there is no longer a central department governing strategy execution as alluded to *“and if there is I don’t know about it, my apologies to the Company, but really I don’t think there is” (23:288-23:391).* Hence, individual departments are responsible for executing their strategies. The participant continues by asserting, *“It’s not very good at this stage. And then again I remember in the olden days, not that I’m – you know I’ve only been here since 2013, and we had the business cases and BO (business optimisation department) did try to do some type of measurement or return on an investment after things were implemented” (21:205-21:480).* This is supported as follows *“right now I think with also the BO section that disappeared, that is a little bit of grey area” (8:631-8:737).*

4.4 Project Selection

The initiative or project selection refers to the approach followed when prioritising initiatives or projects undertaken by the organisation to achieve the strategic objectives. Within this case the way, selection is conducted is analysed and discussed.

4.4.1 Project Selection Influence

The participants within this case are all involved in the execution of strategic projects. One of the participants believes the alignment of the project to the overall strategy must be determined before projects are initiated *“I think a lot of projects come in and gets registered with the PMO and a project manager will be allocated, and it is not necessarily one hundred percent aligned to the strategic pillars of the company”* (5:1280-5:1484). The ensuing narrative from a different participant provides an indication of the state of the initiative or project selection approach.

“You’re still fighting, yes, because you still have business units – I just want to add to that because that will probably clarify that a little bit more, is that what they try to then do is to say, okay fine, we from a strategic level have got Board initiatives. So, let’s identify if those projects in the different areas is a Board category one project. So that will also give it a higher priority so to speak, you know it will have a bit of more “oomph.” So your project not only has a priority within the unit it also has a classification if it is a Board category one or not” (13:1233-13:1825).

Despite this conflicting organisational priorities are still evident and is emphasised as follows *“but you do find that there will be a number one priority in each business unit, like CE (Customer Experience) will have a number one, EBU (Enterprise Business Unit) will have a number one and Marketing will have a number one, for example”* (13:256-13:448). *“I know they sit and they discuss, each Exec has got his priority list”* (15:663-15:732). This is supported as follows *“Right now there is not that discussion to decide on a levelling out. Okay, so that I think is a problem at the moment because you still have four or three number ones, and we’re still fighting for the same resources”* (13:529-13:749).

Furthermore, participants are of the opinion that this perpetuates a silo mentality and that each project manager will need to defend their own territory. *“No I think each one looks at their own instead of getting together”*

(10:1114-10:1180). This is supported as accordingly *“Business units, everyone will prioritise their project as “priority one” (15:334-15:450).*

4.4.2 Framing Contests

Even though a strategy execution framework is in place, the manner in which initiatives or projects are prioritised (or lack of prioritisation frameworks) is a concern to all the participants. Due to the ineffectiveness of the current initiative or project selection process, framing contests develop. (Kaplan, 2008:729) defines a framing contest as follows *“This model elucidates how actors attempt to transform their own cognitive frames into the organisations predominant collective frames through their daily interactions. Where frames about a decision are not congruent actors engage in framing practices in an attempt to make their frame resonate and mobilize action in their favour”.*

The participants allude to this as follows *“outside, who is more important? Which silo is the biggest? Which one screams the loudest?” (16:542-16:632).* This is reinforced as follows *“sometimes it is “who shouts” the loudest, sorry to say, but at least every business unit” (12:1708-13:248).* Participants are of the opinion that the framing contest is creating an unfavourable business environment and state the following *“Timeline, it comes to – the thing is, everybody – you’ve got too many people seeing their projects – it’s more the in-fighting” (16:408-16:538).*

Besides the regulatory projects, which are a key part of the project portfolio within this case that must be implemented, a set of prioritisation criteria contain both qualitative and quantitative measures. However, a framing contest still develops. Hence, this does not mean that the appropriate projects are implemented based on sound reasoning. Therefore, the manner in which projects or initiatives are selected does influence strategy execution. This is due to a lack of governance during project selection.

4.5 Change Management

Change management in terms of how the organisation manages changes because of new projects or initiatives are discussed below.

4.5.1 Change Management Impact

Change management because of introducing new changes that stem from projects in this case is of concern to the participants. They are of the opinion it could have an effect on projects not achieving the strategic objectives. They accentuate follows. *“Okay, so I believe change management can be a big show stopper, and quite frankly here change management is not really evident except in one of the components which is maybe training, okay, because change management is bigger than training”* (18:208-18:456). Participants believe training interventions are seen as change management initiatives. This concern is supported as follows *“It’s more training. There is no change management that looks as far as I’m concerned about whether your role is changing and you know all of those things which is change management”* (18:1068-18:1254).

The participant continues by emphasising the utilisation of training as a change management intervention *“But, so we do have the Training department that is actually going out there, but sometimes these people get 60 pages of stuff that they actually need to understand, a new product and how it is working and I don’t even know how they actually can absorb it. I haven’t had to deal with it but when my project went in last year I sat down with the training people and I actually was in a training session with them. They had a whole week, the people here, a whole week of training. But in any way”* (18:482-18:986).

Even though concerns were raised regarding change management at no point have the participants indicated it being a major obstacle to strategy execution. This is because the organisation conducts training as alluded to *“I don’t think we have that. You know what we do have, is at least we have a Training department and that sort of fills the gap for”* (24:565-24:696). Training interventions in this case compensates for the lack of a formal change management process. The participants are of the opinion an opportunity for improvement exists, as the current strategy execution framework is not conducive to effective strategy execution.

4.5.2 Communication

This organisation is very inward focussed and results in a silo mentality and a lack of effective communication as stated *“I just feel that it’s not communicated, the structure itself is not communicated” (9:1038-9:1221). “They always forget about the “worker” (19:1269-19:1306).* It is emphasised in the following manner *“Okay, I think I’m getting to something, you know what I can see as a threat and maybe I touched on it a bit earlier, is where we setup an IS PMO, and we were told that, you manage IS projects and stick to your IS project management” (26:877-26:1112).* It is supported as follows *“And you will get slapped over the fingers if you start – but I was used to doing that work you know, but you’re not allowed to do it now. So I think to stay within governance you know that would hamper the delivery of the company as a whole” (26:1173-26:1419).*

A further lack of communication is highlighted as follows by a participant responsible for executing key projects *“you know I’m not party to any of these sessions that they have with the organisation, if you know what I’m saying. Where they talk strategy and they decide on how they’re going to take it down. So I don’t think I’m really qualified to actually answer that” (14:801-14:1054).* The need to improve communication is emphasised accordingly *“So you are building everything and as you would talk to everybody you’re already instilling them, how we’re going to manage the Project” (13:1166-13:1303).*

Within this case, communication is a key element for effective strategy execution. However, it is lacking and there is a need to address this in order for the organisation to improve its execution competence.

4.6. Organisational Architecture

The manner in which organisational architecture is managed in relation to strategy execution is discussed below.

4.6.1 Organisational Structure

Currently the organisation is undergoing an enterprise wide transformation. The restructure at this organisation caused a significant change within the

organisational structure. This has created uncertainty regarding the roles of employees regarding strategy execution. It has resulted in employees being requested to perform roles unfamiliar to them as mentioned *“that is where the biggest problem is, when the guys says, but you keep on using my operational guys to do your projects and that is the biggest thing that you get, the people don’t have sufficient operational people to implement projects correctly”* (22:516-22:781). The above-mentioned results is employees having conflicting priorities and not being sure what jobs to focus on.

Furthermore, it has resulted in the duplication of structures as mentioned *“What did happen after the restructure, we created little pockets of project management disciplines, it started all over the organisation and now we want to pull it together into one again”* (12:1077-12:1270). Individual departments were responsible for executing their strategy hence they structured themselves how they deemed fit without considering the impact on the rest of the organisation.

4.6.2 Organisational Alignment

Due to the duplication of structures across business units, a silo focus was created within this organisation, which affects strategic alignment. The duplication of structures was across other support functions as well as alluded to here *“.... some business analysts (BA’s) as well, so it is almost the replica of what we currently have in IS in one of the other divisions as well”* (7:825-7:946).

The alignment concerns extend to the concern that three core functions of project management in this organisation, namely business analysis, solution architecture and project management are separated. This is stated as follows *“Because if you think about it, what you really want in project management, you want the three things together that must sit together, is your Business Analyst, your Solution Architect and your Project Manager”* (13:628-13:840). The participant continues by mentioning that *“you can’t have those three separately, that is your trilogy that you require because one is going to analyse the business case and write it for you. Then you’ve got your Solution*

Architect that is going to implement the solution, and you're sitting with them from the beginning" (13:842-13:1140). The participant is of the view that these functions must be centralised as alluded to "So we can pull all the project managers together because it doesn't make sense to have business PMs and IS PMs on that, yes" (13:315-13:440).

Based on the above-mentioned the current organisational architecture is not aiding strategy execution. All the participants concur with this assertion. In addition, it is contributing to the lack of effective communication, alignment and is perpetuating the silo mentality. The restructure at this organisation has caused a significant shortage of skills and resulted in an imbalanced resource allocation. This resulted in staff over-allocation and managing a significant number of deliverables as mentioned *".... to have project managers run eight to twelve projects. No! No" (16:1109-16:1172). This issue is further highlighted ".... so right now I don't have a business counterpart. Okay, in the old days and in the old structure there used to be an IS" (4:412-4:532).*

The above-mentioned imbalanced of resource allocation causes quality issues. This affects sound strategy execution and is supported here: *"So at the moment I have got about 12 projects and a lot of them is focused around the fibre to the home, I can call it almost a programme. There is quite a number of projects in there and I actually deal with all the fibre projects or whatever else" (3:1374-3:1630). We might slip up on updating a date here or there, but I think that is forgiven. I think if you've got 12 projects and you run around like a headless chicken you might forget to go and update a risk or an issue date" (9:1228-9:1447).*

Further to this one of the participants have not only highlighted the issue here but also provided the following possible solution to this issue. *"Can I tell you, what I think will work is if we actually have dedicated resources for a project, okay, or maybe a resource working on two projects alone. Because I think dedicated resources you'll actually – you don't have five different projects that you spend five minutes and then it takes you 15 minutes to refocus on something else. Whereas if you perhaps were dedicated, you could sit a*

week, you do the solution, you get done to a point where the documentation is all done and then development can follow. So I believe a dedicated team per project or per two projects will work, almost like what they do for Agile” (18:1681-19:332).

However, a different participant provides the following solution in terms of addressing the organisational alignment concerns: *“And we tackled a million and one things and we delivered ten. I think if everybody stood back and really looked at it nicely and said, you know, if we do it only this 20 that are aligned with our.....” (18:334-18:534).* *“Vision and all those things, we probably would have been in a better position than running around like ants in all directions doing a lot of things but achieving nothing” (18:579-18:752).* Participants believe the organisation should focus on doing the key projects as a collective as doing too many projects causes confusion and results in a shortage of staff to execute the strategy effectively.

There is definitely a need to realign the current organisational architecture caused by the restructure brain drain. This will allow the organisation to support the achievement of its strategic objectives in an efficient and effective manner.

4.6.3 Competencies

Two of the four participants were employed by the organisation for a significant number of years. They had always been involved with the project management discipline responsible for executing strategic projects and have extensive experience in this regard. They are managing key strategic projects for their organisation. The two remaining participants were at the organisation for less than one year. They too had been entrusted with managing key strategic projects due to their substantial experience regarding the project management discipline.

Participants in this case believe the organisation has made a substantial investment in training the project management staff to perform their jobs. It is emphasised as follows *“but I know specifically that the organisation has*

actually put a huge investment in getting all of the project managers through PMBOK (10:1594-10:1718). “I think the project managers that are here, a lot of them are certified or they’ve actually gone through at least the PMBOK training” (9:292-9:425).

In addition to this, the organisation is investing in the up skilling of staff involved in project execution, especially those who do not have the appropriate skills within the organisation. This is stated here: *“I know that some of the lower-levels, people that are not necessarily project managers yet, that is like in the PMO office, they’ve been going to internal project management courses or whatever else where I’m actually a mentor for one of the ladies. So they are investing in that I think” (11:285-11:577).* The upskilling constitutes both training courses and mentoring of staff by senior and experienced employees within the organisation.

Furthermore, participants are of the opinion that the staff are technically well educated to perform their jobs to the best of their ability as mentioned here *“We’ve got some amazing Project Managers here with amazing skills. What I like about it is everybody is willing to help each other and assist each other” (17:1358-17:1511).*

Based on the above-mentioned the leadership support to upskill the staff is evident. This further illustrated with the mentoring and support to one of the participants from the chief information officer. *“My Chief Information Officer (CIO), when you go to him is – when you talk about “open door policy” it is a genuine open door policy, you go in he listens to what your scenario is, he helps you unpack it, he doesn’t give you a solution he guides you towards it” (17:1759-18:323).* *“And then he offers assistance for you where it is needed, and while that is happening he is mentoring you as well and he is giving you – saying, I’ve been in a similar situation, this is what I found to work. Why don’t you try one and two, come back to me let’s look at that, and then we discuss three and four” (18:325-18:642).*

Furthermore, within this case there are resource constraints because departments are competing for the same resources, which is fuelling the unfavourable business environment as encapsulated below. *“Availability is a big problem. So from a capacity point of view it is a huge problem. Just to give you an idea, we might have ten project managers, we might have six solution architects and you have two IBF resources. So now all ten project managers are trying to get a solution out and those six solution architects you know are trying to fight for resources and we’re all fighting for maybe – or let’s say half of the projects is IBF related, so you’re fighting for two resources. So capacity is a big problem in some areas” (14:1333-14:1868).*

Within this case, the organisation has invested in their staff training. This, despite the enterprise wide restructure because of cost cutting the leadership have invested in their staff. The staff have the required project management skills and experience to perform their jobs to the best of their ability. The leadership support for employees, with regard to training and development is evident in this organisation and is driving employee capability. However, resource constraints are influencing the employee capability within this organisation.

4.6.4 Project Management Tools

A range of tools are currently utilised to support the project management discipline execution within this case. This includes the day to day tracking as well as from a reporting perspective. The comments are indicative of the range of tools utilised *“We use Microsoft Project to track your project. You use JAS to help manage and report” (5:201-5:291).* *“Look, it’s really good there with JAS the way they set it up, and if I look at the development that is going into the new enterprise it is one of the best models probably out there” (9:201-9:409).*

Even though ad hoc technical issues are experienced, the participants have indicated their acceptance of the tools as emphasised here *“the adoption of JAS is very good I would say” (7:734-7:778).* The participant continues, *“The challenges is that the tool is sometimes a bit slow” (9:344-9:402).*

Furthermore, these tools are regularly reviewed for relevance to the job at hand. It provides an opportunity for the organisation to effect timely changes to these tools in support of the processes being followed. The participants highlighted the following in support of this assertion *“it is a living process, and it constantly gets tweaked as where and what is needed”* (10:678-10:762). This is supported as follows *“And I know that they’re also in the process of reviewing the methodologies and things again with an external vendor which is also interesting”* (6:1063-6:1210).

Another participant emphasised this in the following manner *“Okay, so absolutely. So just to talk about the tools specifically JAS. We did have – we had it implemented and we worked for a couple of years probably on it, and then we realised, you know what, we needed to address certain issues. Okay and we’ve actually just gone, two/three weeks ago, we’ve just re-organised the whole of JAS”* (9:1864-10:434).

The tools are utilised from a project management perspective. There is no clear evidence within this case, as to where the tools and techniques are utilised during the strategic management process within this organisation. This is noted in the comments below *“It is, but whether they are applying project management skills and stuff at a strategic level, that I cannot actually say”* (6:207-6:332). *“But we’re only a part of a bigger thing, because we are not the only one who is executing on the strategy. There is your training and all those other components and the marketing”* (17:208-17:391).

Based on the above-mentioned it can be asserted that the communication regarding the utilisation of tools and techniques for strategy execution is not clear to the staff entrusted with executing the strategy. The participants are familiar with what tools are utilised but they are unsure as to when these tools and techniques are applied. From the evidence at hand, tools and techniques are utilised in an ad hoc manner, as the organisation deems relevant.

4.6.5 Culture

This organisation has a culture that is based on good working relationships in order to execute the strategy effectively. This is described as follows *“So*

that's part of your thing, but that also helps with relationship building, because now you're building a relationship with specifically again your SMs (Senior Managers), GMs (General Managers) and Execs" (14:855-14:1027). The participant continues by mentioning that "If you don't have that it is – one failure causes a snowball effect down the line, and then you start getting the blame salute where everybody stands like this (participant points a finger at the researcher) (16:1506-16:1669).

This is supported by a different participant that alludes the environment to the leadership team *"my Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is, when you go to him is – when you talk about "open door policy" it is a genuine open door policy" (17:1759-17:1883). The participant continues by stating that "you go in he listens to what your scenario is, he helps you unpack it, he doesn't give you a solution he guides you towards it" (18:195-18:323).*

Despite the above-mentioned participants were of the opinion that the organisation has regressed in terms of strategy execution *"no, I just think with regards to us, we went to a "mature" organisation to having nothing in three years' time" (12:946-12:1060). A different participant agrees upon this: "we do, I mean we were mature in it, we went from mature to very immature" (4:480-4:557). The participant continues by mentioning, "I was in a meeting yesterday to give an example, I say it is not completely "mature" yet, where we were looking at the role of "acceptance testing" and who is "responsible" for the actual "creation" of the test data. Does it sit with the Project Manager? Or does it sit with the Test Analyst" (11:1156-11:1491).*

There is a need for the organisation to realign its culture to the manner in which the organisation wants to achieve its strategic objectives. A comprehensive approach is required and not the ad hoc application of key competencies to ensure effective strategy execution.

4.7 Conclusion

The table below provides a positive and negative summary of the dimensions discussed pertaining to the role of project management during strategy

execution within this case. Table 4-3 below is followed by a detailed description of the findings.

Table 4-3: Case A – Within Case Analysis Summary

Theme	Positive	Negative
Process Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dynamic processes utilised. - Processes defined. - Defined project management disciplines utilised. - Centralised project management oversight. - Group strategic direction. - Formal strategy execution methodology followed. - Project management utilised during strategy execution and formulation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Immature process discipline. - Inadequate process governance. - Decentralised project management function. - Lack project management of governance. - No centralised unit managing strategy execution. - Individual departments managing strategy execution. - Lack strategy execution of governance.
Project Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formal criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No consolidated prioritisation process. - Framing contest. - Lack of project selection governance.
Change Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training is utilised for this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No formal interventions. - Lack of communication.

Theme	Positive	Negative
Organisational Architecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness that the organisational architecture must be aligned to strategic goals. - Defined tools are utilised. - Training investment by the company. - Staff highly qualified. - Relationship based culture. - Culture driven by leadership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of organisational structure realignment. - Lack of inter-departmental alignment. - Confusion as to what tools are utilised. - Resource constraints. - Loss of intellectual property. - Lack of culture realignment.

This organisation has moved from a disciplined process approach to an immature process driven culture. This is largely due to the enterprise wide transformation that the organisation has experienced in recent times. There are processes in place to guide the organisation. In support of these processes the tools currently, being utilised from a project management perspective is ideal as alluded to by the participants. The project management discipline is utilised within strategy formulation and execution within this case.

Furthermore, there is a lack of sound project management governance. In addition to this there is no evidence indicating the effectiveness of this discipline during strategy execution. Within this case, framing contests are evident regarding the prioritisation of projects even though a formal project selection criterion is in place. Those who shout the loudest and wield most influence have their projects prioritised. Participants are aware that a strategy execution methodology is in place. However, execution and complying with these processes remains an issue.

Within this organisation, communication is lacking and there is a need to address this in order for the organisation to improve its execution competence. Training of staff within this organisation is utilised to convey

changes within the organisation. It is utilised as a change management mechanism.

What is evident from the statement above is that the staff are allowed to explore ways of executing effectively outside of the guidelines that exist within the organisation. This allows them to utilise the most appropriate tools and techniques at the time to ensure that projects are executed effectively to meet the organisations strategic objectives. Hence, it is not a rigid process that is enforced but rather what is required to ensure effective execution.

Chapter 5 : Within Case Analysis – Case B

This chapter provides a detailed account of the within case analysis for Case B. The organisational background is described thereafter the data production approach is discussed. In addition to this the respective themes are analysed and the chapter culminates with a conclusion of the within case analysis.

5.1 Company Background

This organisation is a leading African mobile communication company providing a wide range of communication services, including mobile voice, messaging, data and converged services to millions of customers. Their roots are in South Africa, where they have grown their mobile network business to include African countries. In South Africa, this organisation is regarded as one of the biggest telecommunications company's in terms of market share. Their mobile networks cover a vast population. Via their Africa business, they also offer services to enterprises in countries across the continent. Participants interviewed in this case were employed by the South African operation. Hence, this study applies to the South African operation only.

5.2 Data Production Approach

The manner in which the data was collected is discussed below.

5.2.1 Interviews

Due to the nature of the study four senior managers responsible for managing strategy formulation and strategy execution were interviewed at their organisations premises during the last quarter of 2016 and the first quarter of 2017. The participants have extensive working and technical experience within the industry. This is supported by the appropriate academic qualifications for their roles they are fulfilling. Furthermore, they possess significant institutional knowledge regarding the concepts being studied. Below find Table 5-1 summarising the background of the interviewees.

Table 5-1: Case B - Participant Profiles

#	Job Title	Description
1	Executive Head for Strategy and Research	A big focus of the participants time is more on the Research and Strategy side but is very involved in the strategy formulations of the Company. Does support in terms of the research to substantiate a lot of the business models and things like that. Been at the organisation for probably 15 years. Qualifications, has a Natural Science Degree and an MBA, Masters in Chemistry and a Research background.
2	Head of Strategy	Has an undergraduate in Electrical Engineering, Post Graduate in Industrial Engineering and a Post Graduate in Computer and Software Engineering. Been in the Industry in various Roles and in various Companies for the last 28 years. Developed hardware, developed software and has been with the organisation for 18 years in various sections. Started in Engineering, the Product development area back in 2000, and then moved along into all sorts of other things, management, products, services and ultimately in strategy.
3	Executive Head of Strategy	Part of the strategy team at group level for the organisation. Participants role is principally three things one is to help to develop the Strategy. Secondly to provide Strategic assistance to the Business around unblocking areas that are blocked. Lastly to be thought leaders team on certain topics within the Telco space. Background, 14 years in IT and in the organisation for the last year and a bit, has been principally around Strategy Formulation and Execution for the last six years.
4	Principle Specialist in Mergers and Acquisitions	Currently in Mergers and Acquisitions, buying and selling companies on behalf of the group. A large chunk of the participants career is in technology and management consulting. So from contracting days right up to eight

		years ago has worked in consulting. From then joined the Technology area in the Business Analysis and Demand Management, and then moved into Group Strategy.
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5.2.2 Documentation

This organisation's annual combined and corporate reports were reviewed for further information pertaining to this study. The participants were not comfortable in sharing any other documentation. They were of the opinion that these documents contain strategic sensitive information that could be a valuable source of information to competitors if availed in the public domain. This included process and procedure documentation. Below find Table 5-2 containing the list of documents reviewed.

Table 5-2: Case B - Document List

#	Name	Description
1	Combined Report 2015/2016	The report provides a detailed account to the stakeholders of its controls, strategy, organisational performance for the financial year. Furthermore, it also provides a business outlook for the future.
2	2015/2016 Corporate Control Report	This report communicates the organisations approach to corporate governance. It highlights the structures in place to manage corporate governance.

5.2.3 Observations

The participants were very relaxed while being interviewed. They exhibited excellent knowledge regarding the project management and strategy execution concepts, its purpose and how it is applied within the organisation. The participants were very respectful towards the direction and governance provided from a parent company perspective. They were decisive and forthcoming with their answers. Throughout the data collection process they acknowledged the urgent need to ensure that projects are executed effectively

on a consistent basis. They were keen on improving the current processes utilised by the organisation.

The section that follows discusses the themes identified within this case. Firstly, the process approach is analysed. Thereafter the manner in which project selection is conducted is reviewed. The role of change management, organisational architecture and organisational capability addressed as well.

5.3 Process Approach

From strategy, formulation and reporting on these strategic initiatives there are well-governed processes in place. This can be attributed to the process discipline from a parent company perspective. The parent company provides guidelines in terms of the processes utilised.

5.3.1 Corporate Process Ownership

There are specific departments governing the formulation and tracking of the strategic initiatives. Participants emphasised the value of corporate process ownership in enforcing governance. This is alluded to as follows: *“We are fortunate in that sense, we were kept in check by our parent company and they have been around for a lot more years, they’re competing in mature markets we have to be more methodical”* (4:405-4:605).

Corporate process ownership is further illustrated by the participants *“the business units which will come together, put their strategies for their various areas, obviously doing their best market research and everything else that gets collated into one kind of board pack, which gets then approved by the board, reviewed and approved by the board”* (3:899-3:1195). The organised nature indicating the importance of the corporate process ownership is expressed accordingly. *“So the process in itself is very structured, it is in a sense very – it has very specific “deadlines” and it is coupled into very specific targets in terms of the organisation’s deliverables”* (4:1150-4:1344). Below in Figure 5-1 find the Corporate Process Ownership structure as alluded to above.

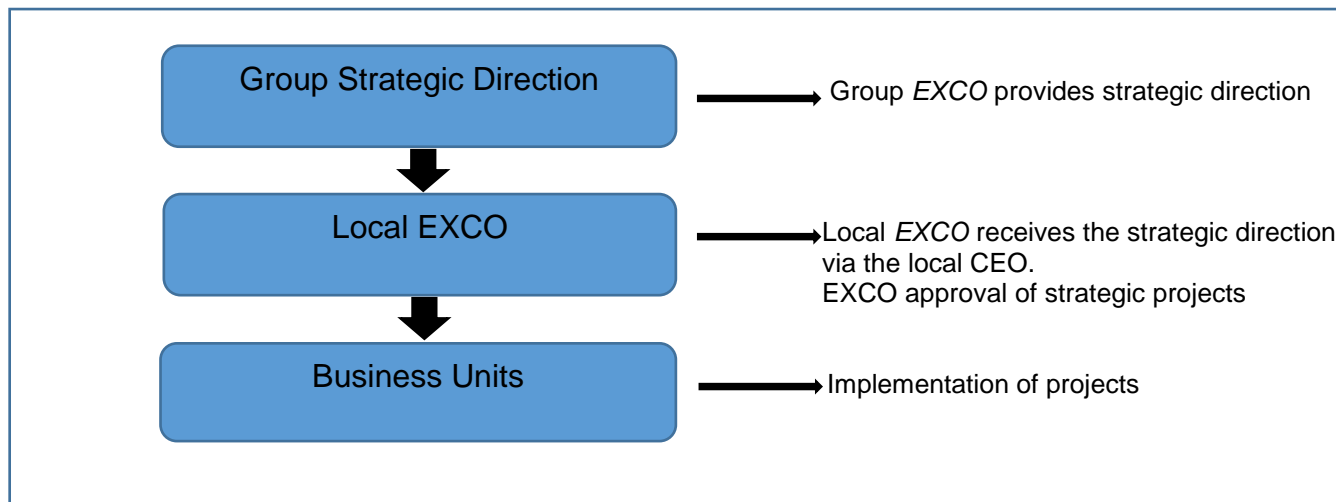


Figure 5-1: Case B - Corporate Process Ownership

Together with structured governance, this organisation has support processes defined as well. However, the participants believe these are not utilised effectively. Furthermore, they believe there is a silo mentality when it comes to strategy execution. *“I think the execution part of it and the responsibility of it is very much in the business unit”* (8:405-8:624). This is because the individual business units are entrusted to manage strategy execution and only report on the progress. *“Each business unit in which strategy is executed is responsible for it”* (7:756-7:880). The way these processes are applied are analysed in the sections that follow.

5.3.2 Project Management Approach

The project management discipline is evident within this organisation. A blend of formal project management methodologies are prescribed by this organisation. The participants confirm this: *“Definitely and that was very much driven by the main shareholder as well, but I know if I just look at in terms of some of the people what sort of courses they’re doing, then it’s sort of – a lot of them now because of the way I think project management courses are sort of structured they go for PRINCE2, but I think underlying the PMBOK is probably by far the most sort of used and known”* (7:204-7:606).

The blend of project management methodologies utilised is further highlighted *“So we do have portfolio management in place, we obviously have the*

programme and project management using the Prince methodology. There is a central PMO which provides governance to various areas. Where project managers don't report into that governance structure we do ensure that at some point that they have covered their basis. So it's dependent in the business unit that they're employed" (7:537-7:937).

A different participant provided another view and had the following to say *"And then depending on you know, who is prepared to be a test phase with this where, you know following project management methodologies, not strictly PMBOK or you know – what's the other one? Prince 2 or anything of the sort where you know purely looking at it from, you know, these are the activities that you're doing this week, how did you go? And then using "leading" and "lagging" indicators as a measure of progress" (2:1681-2:2113).* A further participant commented *"So depending on what's required they do have people that drive those – so now we've called them Business Managers which will coordinate and do that project management activity across the business units" (4:250-4:457).*

Furthermore, the participants have contrasting views on how the application of the project management discipline is applied during the strategy execution. This participant felt that *"It is end-to-end but it is not done in a very project management style. It is end-to-end in a sense that it gets very incorporated into our financial sort of plan" (7:906-7:1070).* *"And previously we had a very sort of formal structure of project management where we literally sort of had a project management team and there was a lot of communication done in the organisation, but that in itself is I think so embedded in the way we do work" (4:378-4:1050).* Another participant commented as follows. *"Invariably project management in the organisation is happening who shouts the most" (9:1017-9:1286).*

One of the other participants accentuated *"Okay, so within the end-to-end process very little in terms of the rigid project management discipline, however, we are quite rigorous in terms of managing the process from the*

end-to-end perspective because obviously we have board commitments; there are deliverables that need to be met. Therefore, we do apply you know certainly at a very high level project management principles” (3:763-3:1153). This participant continued by stating *“I think this one aligns to what I said before, we use project management elements but not the end-to-end process, you know we don’t have project managers per se on strategic initiatives” (3:1292-3:1571).* A different participant contradicts the above-mentioned as follows *“So I would look at project management more in terms of the execution, not the formulation of it” (4:1317-4:1414).*

This organisation has transcended from a well-structured project management discipline to an ad hoc utilisation of the discipline. Within this case, the project management discipline is applied at the discretion of the respective business. Hence, the uncertainty in the way the utilisation of the project management discipline is perceived among participants. Within this case, there is no clear evidence that project management is a key enabler for strategy execution.

5.3.3 Strategy Execution Approach

This organisation is driven from a main shareholder perspective. They can function as they see fit but with recommendations from the group. The parent organisation as the major shareholder provides a key influence in budget approvals and oversight. The way strategy execution is managed provided contrasting views.

Within this organisation, strategy execution is regarded, as a key competency. It is asserted as follows: *“that’s why the realisation now where you don’t necessarily have room to grow in terms of connections, that’s why it’s dawning on people now that it’s about execution. Strategy execution you have to formalise that process a hell of a lot better than what I did in the past” (6:1704-6:2171).* The participant continues by stating: *“Like I said it was easy to meet your targets and your budgets and whatever without having to go into the detail, and ensuring that you managed the process from start to finish. It’s becoming more and more critical and it’s becoming more and more accepted*

that people and the CEO and whatever are starting to realise that it's not about defining the strategy, it's about execution" (6:316-6:716).

Participants were not of the same mind in terms of the approach. One of the participants stated the following. *"So is there a specific process and methodology. Yes, there is, and it is quite structured but in a way it is very "dynamic" as well" (5:1130-5:1268). "I think as a strategy team they know what to do as an Executive Committee (EXCO) side, and it is normally on an EXCO level, there is an EXCO member responsible for one of these thrusts to actually be executed on, if I can put it like that" (5:1343-5:1563).*

However, this was contradicted with this comment *"By virtue of the fact that we're growing some would say despite ourselves, there was not specific formal methodology or process that was followed in executing the strategy" (3:1175-3:1350).* The participant continues by iterating *"There is a process of defining, let's say, product life cycles and marketing but there's not a specific strategy or methodology to implement strategy, and that's going to be the shortcoming of this Industry" (4:206-4:403).* A different participant concurred with the above-mentioned quote and alluded to the fact that the organisation intends to improve the current process. *"There is no standard, but what we are moving towards is increased precision on execution management and largely moving it towards project management space" (2:1226-2:1386).*

Despite no formal methodology being utilised to manage strategy execution there are informal praxis that developed within the organisation to manage the strategy execution. Strategy is formulated at board level and the business units within this case are solely responsible for strategy execution. Oversight is provided centrally from a positioning and remedial action perspective. This is described accordingly. *"And then each business unit would have a specific sort of unit that would drive that, but there are, and it is not contradictory to what I said, but there is an overarching what we call an Enterprise Project Management team, but they really get involved when it moves from a strategic position into sort of more operational where the strategy becomes" (5:204-5:564).* This is supported by a different participant: *"Each business unit in*

which strategy is executed is responsible for it. The strategy team provides “input” and “oversight” (7:756-7:880).

Despite oversight from the Enterprise Project Management team and the strategy department, the organisation still operates in silos. This is mentioned as follows: *“Because like in any organisation we still have a lot of silos in it but those things need to all come together to be able to – like you said for instance, we have a whole Billing and Admin function group, but you can have the best product that we’ve launched in terms of a Technology, but if you can’t bill for it we can’t operationalise it. So the Enterprise Project Management team comes really together where making sure that the billing guys has actually been able to understand the product so that they can actually put out the right billing sort of rules to be able to be operationalised” (19:1316-19:1978).*

Within this case, each business unit is responsible for their own strategy execution. This is without a formal enterprise wide methodology being followed to execute the strategy. However, a high-level framework is being followed to provide input and oversight to the strategy being executed as alluded to by the participants.

5.3.4 Strategy Execution Reporting

Within this case, the participants assert that strategy execution reporting is based on financial targets being tracked for progress. They accentuate that no consideration is given as to how the financial targets are achieved. This is highlighted with the comments accordingly.

“Our financial plan is normally a five year plan but that doesn’t mean anything, so it is a three year and a one year plan and that in itself gets approved in January. And then in January what happens is the business units would then say, okay, given that these were the strategic objectives we had and the thrusts which we’ve discussed with the board and the shareholders, this was the approval and this is the budgets that link to it. The budget then gets into a cycle where it gets approved by shareholders and then with that budget we

would say, okay, given that these were our strategic thrusts, this was the resources that we get into it and now it gets executed into the organisation on a business level” (4:1863-4:2604). “Which means Finance would actually report on these things on a monthly basis from a financial point of view and again because they’re linked to targets. So there would be a very specific target that we’d have to reach like three percent of – service revenue must come from enterprise Projects” (7:1097-7:1395).

A different participant agreed as follows, “I think it’s purely accounting based, okay, and that is the problem. It’s purely driven from the budget. Now the budget as far as I’m concerned – it’s the argument I had with the people in Finance. They said, why do we need a strategy, we’ve got a budget” (8:214-8:809). “But it’s purely driven from an accounting perspective. And the reason is simple, to be blunt you know, the main shareholder is not interested in anything else they’re interested how much do they make” (8:845-8:1036).

These financial measures are linked to specific performance criteria that must be achieved by the organisation. “Normally out of this we try and not make it more than ten, a maximum of ten, this year it is a little less than that I think last year it was ten and this year we actually have only about seven or eight strategies. These seven or eight they get very specific key performance indicators (KPI’s), and those are very quantifiable and that is what gets measured” (9:270-9:633).

In addition to this, the various departments have specific metrics that are aligned to the organisational targets. This is alluded to in the following manner. “So if we say, you know, the first strategic thrust or focus area is to ensure that we grow mobile data with CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) of X percent in the three years, and the way the business units actually – and then there is what we call Consumer and there is Enterprise, they then get specific targets” (9:769-9:1130). These targets are then cascaded down the various managers and their employees who are entrusted to meet these targets in order to ensure that the organisations overall targets are achieved. It is mentioned accordingly “You know if we’re talking about a network rollout

and you want to spend R8.5 Billion, then it's simply having the manager in the room on a monthly basis and you know working through your agreed 15 KPI's on how you're progressing and then he has his, you know, 400 KPIs that he has with his team, and he manages them on a RAG status you know every week, Red, Amber, Green, don't talk to me about the Green tell me about the Amber and the Red. And I think it is that kind of rigor that you know really lies in the success of execution" (10:749-10:1499).

The organisational financial indicators are central in assessing strategy execution within this case. No consideration is given to the processes followed or how the existing processes may be improved and optimised. Product profitability together with key performance indicators for employees constitute the organisational financial indicators that are the major determinants for strategy execution within this case.

5.4 Project Selection

The initiative or project selection refers to the approach followed when prioritising initiatives or projects undertaken by the organisation to achieve the strategic objectives.

5.4.1 Project Selection Influence

Within this case, the strategy is prescribed to the organisation from a parent company perspective. The local operation will then decide what projects to execute to achieve the strategic objectives. This is alluded to as follows. *"I think you know if you look at it is you have the strategy, and in our case it is sort of "forced" strategic, but out of that there is strategic – what we call "strategic focus areas." And we also talk about them as sort of "big bets" and those are the things that is big enough to warrant the attention of an executive team, because if we are focused on them they would make up the bulk of what we need to meet the overall targets of the shareholders and of the Investors. So what happens is that the strategic focus areas we can identify it at the strategy session and this sort of gets reviewed and identified once a year" (8:1768-8:2403).* The same participant continued by stating that *"So we have very specific targets but we want to accelerate that sooner, and then that*

becomes – so although there's identified strategic focus areas they in themselves are prioritised. And these things are prioritised on an EXCO level so it is on an executive – on a EXCO which is on a Board level" (16:1030-16:1335).

Based on the above the strategic focus areas then get specific projects assigned for execution. *"So in the big bets and strategic focuses even if there is sort of like seven to eight projects they might have sort of identified that there is a priority. So that priority will be allocated here and we have for instance a Fibre rollout as a strategic thrust. So we would say, okay, we need to put an acceleration programme there" (16:690-16:1028).* In this organisation, the project selection is based on a structured financial management process. *"We have quite a rigorous approach there in that "all medium to large initiatives have to have a business case attached to it. And those business cases then are selected on the basis of, you know, who has the best outcome, whether it's IRR (Internal Rate of Return) or NPV's (Net Present Values)" (5:978-5:1230).* Another participant supports this as follows *"Like I said, everything is "driven" by bottom line. So any project which in theory is going to give you the biggest return, that's the one which is being pushed" (10:357-10:825).* These project selection indicators are discussed below.

5.4.2 Project Selection Indicators

Once these projects are in execution it is then monitored based on financial indicators. It is noted that should the competitive landscape change during the execution of these projects, then this organisation will change the focus by re-prioritising as noted in the following comment: *"Resources would be put there and then resources maybe would be taken back. So your question is in terms of how does it impact it? The execution is that there is a stage where we decide, okay, we decided to actually execute in this way, it is not supporting the key strategic area now given that something has changed in the market, and that given can be halfway through the process because the competitor who might do something. We would then stop that and we would refocus" (17:1001-17:1601).*

A different participant is of the opinion that the selection of projects does not influence strategy execution. He stated that *"it may well just be that one's assumptions that one made in terms of the initial business cases, they may have been incorrect, but I don't think they 'influence' strategy execution, I think execution happens you know whether you've chosen the right initiative or not, you know, that remains to be seen"* (6:205-6:628). Another participant mentioned, *"So it's more the strategy that influences the projects"* (8:800-8:854).

This organisation is focused on selecting the appropriate projects or initiatives that will ensure that the strategic objectives are being achieved. This is based on financial targets that has both business unit and employee key performance indicators associated to these financial targets. It is emphasised accordingly *"Normally out of this we try and not make it more than ten, a maximum of ten, this year it is a little less than that I think last year it was ten and this year we actually have only about seven or eight strategies. These seven or eight they get very specific KPIs, and those are very quantifiable and that is what gets measured"* (9:270-9:633).

Should projects or initiatives not be deemed feasible upon review the organisation will re-prioritise these projects. They will add new projects or initiatives in pursuit of these strategic objectives. A different participant supports this by stating, *"Realistically strategy hasn't changed, if you think about it what changed is the technology which supports the strategy. We started with basic voice, then we went to basic text, then we went to multi-media services, pictures and whatever, and then we went to basic browsing and now we go to full browsing. So it's a techno push rather than anything else, there's no pull"* (11:431-11:809).

Within this case there is a formal approach provided from a parent company perspective. However, there is a major emphasis on financial returns when executing projects or initiatives. If the incorrect assumptions are made in the business case the risk of not achieving these targets are a possibility. If projects or initiatives are no longer viable, the organisation will re-prioritise.

Therefore, within this case the project selection does not influence strategy execution.

5.5 Change Management

The role of change management during strategy execution within this case is discussed below.

5.5.1 Change Management Impact

Participants in this case concur that change management is important and key to effective change within an organisation. Furthermore, they are of the opinion that structured change management must be deployed. *“Change management is critical. So for any of our strategies we have a communications plan, and within the communications plan there are a whole host of change initiatives that we, you know, that we design based on you know whatever change is required”* (8:212-8:473). This is supported as follows by a different participant *“Because if you don’t have that and people get – your main thing is the people, it’s the change management”* (11:924-11:1030).

The organisation has grown significantly over the years and change management initiatives have not been effective even though the organisation believes it is critical. *“So by virtue of the fact that we’re growing like substantially high rates over the years we became complacent”* (3:1976-3:2087).

A contrasting view is presented by a different participant alluding to change fatigue within the organisation: *“Change management it’s the same as the organisational design. We went through change management initiatives in the past, the problem with all of those is where they were taking too long, and there was different people who had different expectations about change management. What is change management? What am I trying to change? Invariably change management has to do with “soft” issues rather than anything else, the skills and what have you. I won’t forget my – my staff compliment to conform to be – and I want people to understand that now managers are going to be of a certain race. That was the change*

management we had in the organisation rather than anything else. So does it play a role? I think people in the organisation are sick and tired of all these change initiatives and change management and whatever, which leads to nothing tangible' (15:215-15:1074). This view is supported as follows "So I think this is where we are a bit immature. Like I said we had progressed at such pace that it was actually difficult for people and the systems to keep up with that pace" (10:609-10:822).

Change management initiatives are in place within this case. However, it is not effectively executed due to organisational change fatigue and market leader complacency.

5.5.2 Communication

Within this case, participants assert that communication of the strategy is very important. They are of the view that this is integral to obtain buy in from all employees executing the strategy. *"Now I know for a fact that every year there's a road show and there's a two day/single day workshop with the CEO and his EXCO where essentially it's this "speed dating" concept, you go from area to area and people tell you, this is the strategy for next year, and it's been this and that, and we'll tell you" (14:518-14:834).* However, the participants assert that due to the rapid growth of the organisation certain aspects to ensure effective strategy execution were neglected.

They believe there is generic communication to all employees. *"So our what we call Corporate Affairs would do the communication, which we have quite a sort of strict policy in the organisation that business units are not allowed to bombard the organisation with information. It goes through one central point of communication" (15:915-15:1473).* However, the strategy is not communicated enterprise wide as commented *"One of the things that I'm completely sort of interested in is that why are companies so reluctant to communicate their strategy internally to the organisation? Because I think it is extremely important that people like I've said to you earlier understand why they are doing things and what is the big picture they're working towards, because I think then they have a lot of more tolerance for a lot of things that*

they can't understand" (26:596-26:1194). This concern is further supported "When you ask this question to any executive team member they would say to you, but you can't communicate the strategy too wide because it is you know strategic" (26:1220-26:1422).

Furthermore, what is not effectively communicated is what the strategy means for the individuals who are required to execute the strategy. It is raised as follows *"So I think people understand the strategic focus areas, but what is not done well is for instance to say, okay, we are moving away from a complete mobile play to a fibre play which bring along a very different mind-set of business. And then suddenly you have a lot of engineers that is used to a certain way of doing telco and now suddenly they would have to go into a way that Google and Apple is doing business which is very different from a telco point. And that process is not managed very well" (22:234-22:741). "So my thing is that, like we right now, when we prepare our strategy we can only disseminate it to a certain amount of people in the organisation and there is actually people in the organisation that needs to know more about it than the people that actually know" (27:205-27:530). This is emphasised by a different participant "I think the one thing we're not talking about is "cascade" in terms of strategy formulation and execution across a large organisation, is how do you translate those power points into operational terms right down to, you know the lowest level in the organisation" (9:212-9:479).*

The above-mentioned lack of effective communication results in employees not understanding what is required of them in terms of their role regarding strategy execution. *"Firstly the buy-in and understanding by every staff member within the organisation as to what the strategy and where do they play a role" (10:1072-10:1212). "Every staff member has to have a basic understanding of where the organisation is going and how they play a role in that" (10:1344-10:1466).*

This is supported by a participant that states that *"Ultimately strategy should be executed, you know sitting in strategy and saying, this is my strategy and you have to execute whether you like it or not, doesn't always work, or it*

doesn't work" (3:1613-3:1974). "Remember one of the big debates in the organisation is something which essentially has always been happening for whichever reason it is. We don't know what the "strategy" is" (14:339-14:516).

The strategy is communicated generically within this case. What the strategy means to individual employees is not conveyed to the recipients of this communication in a meaningful manner. Participants are of the opinion that this is a key requirement. This detailed explanation of what the strategy means will allow employees to identify, accept and understand their role during the strategy execution process.

5.6 Organisational Architecture

The manner in which organisational architecture is managed in relation to strategy execution is discussed below.

5.6.1 Organisational Structure

Within this case, the organisation operates in with a lean structure. The organisation is focused on ensuring that they are adequately resourced for delivering projects or initiatives that will enable them to effectively execute their strategy. A participant accentuates this in the following manner: *"That's sort of in a way – and again let me question my thinking because you always sort of said, does strategy follow the structure?" (18:457-18:587). "Or does structure follow the strategy? In our life structure follows strategy" (18:629-18:706). "So which means is if the architecture is in one way and it doesn't fit the strategy of it we would change the architecture. So with us definitely structure. The architecture will follow the strategy" (18:743-18:942). "And that's why we have massive amounts of restructures in the organisation, exactly because of that" (18:983-18:1084).*

An example of the above-mentioned is stated accordingly. *"the initial strategy was that fibre was going to be a driver for enterprise, or it would have been driven by enterprise, and then consumer, and then that changed it went back to consumer as opposed to enterprise. So that team of people kept on moving around. Now it's sitting within consumer because there realisation was that it's*

a long-term business, when you're deployed to capture an enterprise you're going to be passing consumers" (12:268-12:719).

However, a different participant is of the same mind as the above-mentioned but states that recently there have not been many changes: *"OD (Organisational Design), yes, it's the usual debate, is it structure or strategy? Or strategy and then structure? There is very few OD initiatives that I'm aware of. The organisation had a major change in the past when split consumer from enterprise, that was about six years ago, but essentially there hasn't been any new major initiatives within the organisation from a structure perspective" (11:2092-11:2472).*

Despite the timing of the last, restructure change this organisation is aware of effecting changes to the organisational architecture to allow the organisation to be suitably structured to follow the strategy to be executed.

5.6.2 Organisational Alignment

Strategy execution is influenced by this organisation experiencing issues with ensuring alignment across divisions. Participants are of the view that the organisation is struggling within this area. It is stated accordingly *"that's probably one of the biggest challenges for large scale strategy execution because, you know, traditionally large organisations and established organisations operate in silos, so when one has a strategy that cuts across multiple silos it is quite difficult to get you know proper harmony across the group" (6:794-6:1120).* This participant continues by mentioning: *"So organisational architecture by its construct for large organisations are problematic, and one needs to be able to work around that to execute successfully" (6:1411-6:1816).* Another participant that states that: *"It is the integration between other business units where I think we struggle a bit" supports this (9:383-9:467).*

A different participant highlights the importance of the alignment of strategy execution by expressing that *"I think strategy executes best where you have that alignment across the organisation and the ability to, you know, do a walk-*

around in the organisation and speak to all levels of the company and to be able to be in a position where if you were to ask them, explain to me how what you are doing now contributes towards the overall achievement of the Strategy” (9:481-9:846). Another participant that accentuates “So alignment is one supports this. *I think the other one that is very important in terms of the execution of the strategy is the buy-in of the different business units of taking ownership and things like that, because a lot of times they can say that is it strategies “problem.” But it comes again for me to alignment, because the people understand” (23:217-23:696).*

The enterprise wide alignment of strategy execution within this case is of apprehension to the participants. This can be attributed to the fact that each business unit is responsible for their own strategy execution. Even though the project management discipline is applied and the strategy department provides oversight within this organisation alignment remains an area of concern for effective strategy execution.

5.6.3 Competencies

At management level employees within this case are highly skilled and possess the relevant academic qualifications for the job at hand. They have organisational as well as industry experience. Furthermore, they have the experience for their required roles, which is managing strategy execution. The credentials of the participants are indicated below.

“I’m the Executive Head for Strategy and Research” (2:250-2:301). “Qualifications, I’ve got a Natural Science Degree and then I’ve got an MBA, and I’ve got a Masters in Chemistry but I’ve got a research background” (2:866-2:1045).

“I’m the Head of Strategy responsible for the definition, the definition, documentation and presentation of the strategic direction of the company” (1:1059-1:1207). “I’ve been in the industry in various roles and in various companies for the last, oh, 28 years. Developed hardware, developed software and I’ve been with the organisation for 18 years in various sections. I

started in engineering. I started the product development area back in 2000, and then moved along into all sorts of other things, management, products, services and ultimately in strategy” (2:1320-2:1726).

“I’m part of the Strategy team, group level” (1:386-1:442). “EHOD Strategy” (10:2007-10:2020). Well I counted my background, 14 years in IT and I’ve been in this organisation for the last year and a bit, but I’ve been principally around strategy formulation and execution for the last six years” (2:212-2:405).

“So I’m a Principle Specialist in Mergers and Acquisitions” (2:217-2:273). “So work experience, a large chunk of my career was in technology and management consulting. So from contracting days right up to eight years ago I worked in consulting. From then when I joined the organisation I joined the technology area in the business analysis and demand management, and then I moved into Group Strategy” (2:436-2:781). The participants within this case have the required skills to manage strategy execution as indicated above.

However, according to the participants they are concerned with the skills of the staff executing the strategy. They are of the opinion that due to the changes in the industry from a competitive landscape. The staff executing the revised approach to the strategy do not possess the skills required for the change in approach. This is expressed as follows. *“...and in this organisation specifically, I remember I joined whenever I joined, we’ve been discussing data warehouse since then, 20 years back and we never put the money in place because it was always too expensive. Now business is about big data and analytics and what have you, so now they embarked on that, but the systems and the processes and also the skills to be able to make sense of that information are not in place” (5:325-5:752).*

This was supported by another participant who stated that *“Yes and no, so it does depend. Where the Industry is moving and especially within the digital space invariably there is probably a 20% to 30% skills gap. So the short answer is we don’t always have the right skills” (7:353-7:574).* According to

another participant the skills gap is because of skills limitations across the industry. It is highlighted as follows. *“I think on the industry itself, it is the one that you’ve said, our biggest challenge is skills”* (23:1477-23:1742). The organisation is cognisant of the above-mentioned but no definitive plans are in place as yet to address this at the time the interviews were conducted.

Another participant indicated that a further factor affecting organisational capability is the lack of resources as alluded. *“To be quite honest, I think they have the appropriate skills. I think their lack is actually completely and utterly the fact that most of the units are under resourced”* (20:731-20:906). This organisation has the skills to continue with its core business. However, they lack the required resources to match the challenges presented from the changes in the competitive landscape to execute their strategy effectively.

5.6.4 Project Management Tools

Within this case specific tools and techniques are utilised during strategy execution. The participants were all familiar with the tools and techniques being deployed. These tools are consistently used across the group of companies to ensure there is integration from a reporting perspective. This is stated as follows *“Mainly because a lot of what we got which is things like this, like tools and techniques are very integrated with our main shareholder because a lot of the projects specifically on the technology side is really things that we adopt and we’re sort of localised it, if I can call it like that”* (11:1486-11:1848).

Even though these tools might not be ideal, they are prescribed from a group perspective and the organisation has to utilise them from a governance point of view. This is described as follows. *“So because we work very integrated with the main shareholder it should be something that is compatible. And because it is very much in a way dictated from them, and we have strategic partnerships with Microsoft as a group company it’s sort of one of the things, it’s just the things we use. So we sort of complain about it but it is not really something, you know, with all due respect”* (11:1850-11:2254).

The participant continues by stating that even though the tools might not be ideal. The information provided to these tools is also concerning and the following is alluded to. *“The challenges is of the fact that it is in a way prescribed so you have to you know adopt it. A lot of times it is not that great to it for instance in our environment. Secondly also what happens is that with tools is that – and we all say that, but we all sort of in a way ignore it, is a tool is as good as the information you input into it and the way it is used in terms of output of it, because it is very easy criticising and saying that, you know, it’s not delivering what they want to do but they forget about the fact, you know, it depends on how much attention you put in and what is going on”* (12:857-12:1505).

Another participant that is of the opinion that staff are not adequately trained to utilise the tools and supports this: *“It definitely will have different tools, or use different tools. They haven’t been trained on those tools they just read a book or they read an article, or their bosses said to them, this is what you have to use, and they try and do all of those. So there isn’t, call it a discipline what is the same across the board. That is the major challenge”* (8:1277-8:1633).

Participants are of the opinion that these tools are not regularly reviewed. Because the tools are prescribed within, the organisation, from a group perspective and that this has been ever present in the organisation: *“I don’t think it is reviewed regularly, I could be wrong to be honest, but I think it’s – because it’s been proven to work for us I think it’s probably just as things arise that they adapt to it”* (6:522-6:724). Within this case standard tools and techniques are utilised as prescribed by the parent company. These tools are updated on an ad hoc basis as deemed fit by the parent company.

Participants within this case are of the view that the organisation must adapt its processes. This must be in accordance with the changes demanded because of the challenges posed from the alteration in the competitive landscape. It is alluded to in the following manner. *“So the inability to actually change as the Industry changes, because like we see now. Telco is not just*

mobile it's a lot more than mobile and if you look at it in any other sector as well. We are reaching into the financial services sector in terms of money, like mobile money and the lines are becoming extremely blurred. And the ability to adapt to that very quickly can either – well if you don't have the ability to adapt to it very quickly it will kill you" (11:1203-11:1692).

A different participant supports the above-mentioned as such: *"There I think is if you are sitting as a R100 Billion company, we're talking about the Titanic. So you pick up this glitch here and there, can you turn your strategy that effectively and that fast enough to be able to take care of those? And the answer is, invariably you don't. So systems, processes and the willingness to look and analyse the numbers on a continuous basis to be able to give you those – let's say those nuggets are not in place" (4:1690-4:2147).*

Participants are of the opinion that there is a need for the organisation to become nimbler in this regard. *"Now invariably the other problem with all these organisations, like I said, and it's not just perennial to us I mean you see it in other bigger companies overseas. The existing IT systems are not flexible and fast enough to give you information soon enough for you to be able to turnaround your strategy" (4:1372-4:1688).* This is supported by another participant *"Our second biggest challenge is the fact that we are much slower as an industry to the new competitors that is coming in, and unless we can get more agile" (23:1477-23:1742).*

In addition to this the staff experience challenges with the tools and techniques due to a lack of training regarding these tools and techniques. This organisation utilises the tools and techniques to the best of their ability to execute their duties despite a lack of training in this regard.

5.6.5 Culture

This organisation has grown at a rapid pace as a result the culture realignment to the demands placed on the company has not been addressed as alluded to *"so I think this is where we are a bit immature. Like I said we had progressed at such pace that it was actually difficult for people and the*

systems to keep up with that pace. So technology just by itself” (10:609-10:822). Another participant agrees “Success of your current Business. So you get comfortable with you’re used to doing and you’re quite happy to carry on with that” (8:992-8:1121). A different participant agrees and is of the view that complacency has set in “They are going to look at the bottom line and they go like, we’re doing fine, so be it” (12:720-12:815).

A lack of culture realignment in terms of strategy execution is further illustrated *“so and like I said in the beginning, strategy definition should be happening from the people who are going to execute the strategy, because then essentially – remember they are the experts, and then if they define it they own it” (14:910-14:1144). This is supported by another participant that mentions “you know, and also the ability of leadership to take in and understand where people’s concerns are as to – they may have had a blind-spot and somebody is kind of, bring it forward and say, this is an issue. They don’t take that in. So I think there is, what could be improved is the feedback” (11:525-11:824).*

5.7 Conclusion

Table 5-3 below provides a positive and negative summary of the dimensions discussed pertaining to the role of project management during strategy execution within this case. The table is followed by a detailed description of the findings.

Table 5-3: Case B - Within Case Analysis Summary

Themes	Positive	Negative
<i>Process Approach</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Well defined processes. - Defined <i>Project Management</i> disciplines utilised. - Central <i>Project Management</i> oversight provided. - Group strategic direction. - Structured <i>Strategy Execution</i> methodology. - Project management applied in an ad-hoc manner and during strategy execution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outdated processes being utilised. - Low process adoption rate. - Decentralised <i>project management</i> function. - Lack of <i>Project Management</i> governance. - Individual departments responsible for execution. - Lack of <i>Strategy Execution Approach</i> governance.
<i>Project Selection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formal criteria. - Centralised EXCO prioritisation. - Sound governance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial criteria primarily.
<i>Change Management</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formal interventions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Change fatigue within the organisation. - Lack of effective communication of strategy.

Themes	Positive	Negative
Organisational Architecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Realignment awareness of organisational architecture. - Specific tools are utilised. - Staff have the required skills. - Sound organisational capability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of proactive organisational structure realignment. - Lack of inter-departmental alignment. - Challenges experienced by staff utilising the tools. - Resource constraints. - Staff overloaded with work. - Lack of training investment. - Complacency. - Lack of culture realignment.

Within this case, there are well-defined processes in place. This can be attributed to the process discipline from a group perspective. The utilisation and the relevance of these processes is however of concern to the participants. Furthermore, they attribute the lethargic adaptation of processes to the competitive demands because of the slow nature of the telecommunications industry. This is because the telecommunication company's processes and systems are still geared for their traditional business. Hence, they cannot react swiftly enough to the changes required.

A formal in house strategy execution framework is followed. However, the alignment of strategy execution is an area of concern. This is because of the strategy execution responsibility being disseminated to the respective business units and the framework to encourage alignment is not executed commendably. In addition to this, the level of communication is an issue within this case. Because the detailed explanation of what the strategy means to individual employees is not communicated effectively. Change management is

not effective due to the organisation being change fatigued due to numerous enterprise wide change initiatives within this organisation. Furthermore, this has resulted in a lack of culture realignment to the demands of the strategy that must be executed.

Within this case, there is a major emphasis on financial returns when executing projects or initiatives. Hence if the incorrect assumptions are made in the business case the risk of not achieving these targets are a possibility. Therefore, financial measures are the key component for strategy execution reporting. Should projects not be feasible or if the incorrect assumptions have been decided upon, It is noted that this organisation will re-prioritise and re-focus the projects or initiatives in pursuit of the strategic objectives. Hence, within this case the project selection does not influence strategy execution.

The organisational architecture and processes are bound to change as the demands of the competitive landscape shift within this case. However, the participants are of the opinion that these changes should be affected proactively with an emphasis on strategy execution.

This organisation has a centralised project management governance structure in place that provides oversight of the decentralised project management function. Even with this in place, there is uncertainty as to when to utilise the project management discipline. Hence, the project management discipline is applied selectively during the strategic management process. Within this case, there is no confirmation that project management is a key enabler for strategy execution.

The organisation has the required skills but due to resource constraints, the employees are overloaded and are not able to fulfil their duties adequately. Utilising the specified tools and techniques is an issue due to a lack of training.

Chapter 6 : Within Case Analysis – Case C

This chapter provides a detailed account of the within case analysis for Case C. The organisational background is provided thereafter the data production approach is discussed. The respective themes are then analysed and a conclusion of the within case analysis is provided.

6.1 Company Background

This organisation is a telecommunication company providing a wide range of communication services, including mobile voice, messaging, data and converged services to customers. Their roots are in South Africa only, where they have grown their mobile network business significantly. They are regarded as very innovative and as a market disruptor within the South African telecommunications environment. Recently this organisation has undergone an enterprise wide transformation that has resulted in a number of new employees being entrusted in key positions pertaining to strategy execution.

6.2 Data Production Approach

The manner in which the data was collected and produced is discussed below.

6.2.1 Interviews

Due to the nature of the study, four senior managers responsible for managing strategy formulation and strategy execution were interviewed at their organisations premises during the first quarter of 2017. The participants have extensive working and technical experience within the industry. This is supported by the appropriate academic qualifications for their roles they are fulfilling. Furthermore, they possess significant institutional knowledge regarding the concepts being studied. Below find Table 6-1 summarising the background of the interviewees.

Table 6-1: Case C – Participant Profiles

#	Job Title	Description
1	Executive Strategy and Business Planning	This participant is responsible for managing strategy execution and business planning for this organisation. This person is a chartered accountant by qualification and has been in the telecommunications industry for close to 20 years with different organisations. This person has always been involved in managing strategy execution within the organisations he has worked in.
2	Head: Strategy Business Operations and Commercial Projects	This participant is fairly new to the telecommunications industry and this organisation. The participant is a mechanical engineer by qualification. This person has a very experienced operational transformation background pertaining to strategic management and execution. Currently responsible for managing the business operational strategy and the commercial projects for the organisation.
3	Executive Head Programme Management	This participant is responsible for bridging the gap between strategy and implementation via programmes and projects within this organisation. This participant is a chemical engineer by qualification and has worked within the information technology sector for a significant number of years. Working experience encompasses management consulting, banking and telecommunications.
4	Chief Information Officer	This participant previously occupied the role of chief information officer at this organisation. This person was responsible for information technology strategy and provided input to the strategy execution process. This participant has both local and international experience within telecommunications and a range of technology companies.

6.2.2 Documentation

The organisation's annual combined and corporate reports were reviewed for further information pertaining to this study. The participants were not comfortable in sharing any other documentation. They were of the opinion that these documents contain strategic sensitive information that could be a valuable source of information to competitors if availed in the public domain. This included process and procedure documentation. Below find Table 6-2 containing the list of documents reviewed.

Table 6-2: Case C - Document List

#	Name	Description
1	Combined Report 2015/2016	The report provides a detailed account to the stakeholders of its controls, strategy, organisational performance for the financial year. Furthermore, it also provides a business outlook for the future.
2	2015/2016 Corporate Control Report	This report communicates the organisations approach to corporate governance. It highlights the structures in place to manage corporate governance.

6.2.3 Observations

The participants were very keen on being interviewed. They displayed great knowledge regarding the project management and strategy execution concepts, its purpose and how it is applied within the organisation. They were decisive and forthcoming with their answers. In addition to this, they were keen on improving the current processes utilised by the organisation. Within this case, there is a desire to improve strategy execution. There is a strive towards continuous improvement regarding the tools utilised for strategy execution.

The section that follows discusses the themes identified within this case. Firstly, the process approach is analysed. Thereafter the manner in which project selection is conducted is reviewed. The role of change management,

organisational architecture and organisational capability is also addressed. Lastly, process relevance within this case is examined.

6.3 Process Approach

This organisation has structured strategy formulation and strategy execution processes in place, which are well governed. This is credited to the leadership support to the strategy execution process within this organisation. The CEO is pivotal to driving strategy execution for the organisation.

6.3.1 Corporate Process Ownership

This organisation has no specific department managing strategy execution due to their lean resource structure. The governance is however driven by CEO. This commences with strategy formulation right through to strategy execution and reporting on these initiatives or projects. This is stated as follows by the participants. *“So we have a strategic process that was signed off and formalised with our shareholders. So there’s a structured strategy process and it talks around regular, I think it is updates” (3:417-3:850).* Furthermore, they express that they *“... have monthly review meetings with the cross functional teams and the entire organisation. We also have an Ops forum running through the projects” (4:1439-4:1581).*

A different participant emphasises the corporate process ownership in the following manner. *“The strategy is set by I think consultative interviews among the senior management within the business where their views on where the company is heading. Those views are consolidated into a strategy document with a number of analysis and research studies as well, and let’s say vetted and presented to the CEO to EXCO and then the EXCO makes a decision with the CEO to what the final, call it version of the strategy is (2:1186-2:1718). “Then that business plan again is filtered down into the business to execute on the strategy, but the strategy is linked to the business plan” (3:222-3:364).* Projects to be executed are identified from the business plan. Below in Figure 6-1 find the Corporate Process Ownership structure as alluded to above.

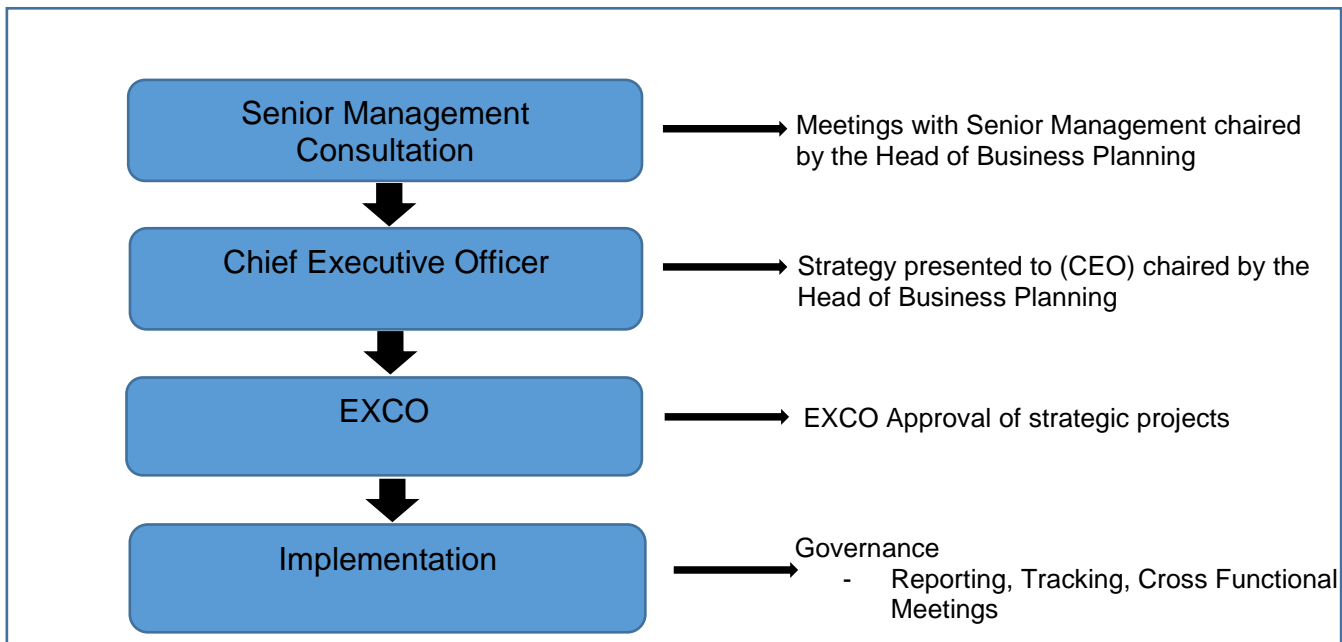


Figure 6-1: Case C – Corporate Process Ownership

6.3.2 Project Management Approach

The project management discipline is utilised within this case. A formal project management framework is in place within this organisation. This is alluded to as follows by a participant. *“So from a project management perspective when the new management team got brought in 2012 we really established a Programme and Project Office, and these were two separate functions within the organisation. And the reason for all that was to look at end-to-end execution and alignment in order to avoid silo mentality with certain things in the end-to-end execution got missed (3:982-3:1365).”*

The project management discipline is decentralised within this organisation. This is asserted as follows. *“Project management, yes, but I think probably not through a central project office, it’s more decentralised into the individual divisions to actually run their own projects to make things happen” (3:622-3:894).* A centralised project management office is utilised to ensure project alignment between the decentralised project management functions within the organisation as mentioned by a participant. *“We do have a centralised programme management office within Finance and Strategy which works, it bridges the gap between all divisions” (4:777-4:913).*

With a formal project management framework being in place within this case. The project management discipline is applied in a dynamic manner. This is described as follows by a participant responsible for the programme management office. *“So we don’t only have a standard approach. As I said for example the guys that roll out networks, they’ll be typical engineers, they’ll probably have a very strong PMBOK approach or a project manager approach like PMBOK. Now I’m not aware of how they do that, in an IT related project you know – what I’m trying to say is I think whatever project manager is in place, will take his past experience, in other words there isn’t an organisational stamp on it, it’s very much dependent on the individual’s approach”* (6:628-6:1170).

This is supported as follows by a different participant. *“It depended on the specific project itself. If it was say a new tariff that got introduced that was pretty much followed with standard IT project management, aligning the product teams, the customer care teams, requirements with a business analyst and following normal Microsoft Project Office”* (3:1582-3:1887). *When it was looking at new strategic execution projects like the launch of the MVNO (Mobile Virtual Network Operator), there we utilised Enterprise Programme Management methodologies and techniques* (3:1889-3:2085).

Despite the project, management framework being in place the participants within this case had different opinions on where within the strategic management process the project management discipline was utilised. This is supported here *“It was after conceptualisation which utilised once the decision was made for implementation. But the Ideation phase came from I would say various business units and business case development was done by that person who came up with the idea which had to be presented to an investment committee and then only Programme or Project Management get involved”* (4:1181-4:1542).

Another participant alluded differently. *“So, I think I’ve covered this before, it’s a little bit disjointed and up to individuals. Therefore, look, some departments like the network department they might be very rigorous in that regard. I don’t*

have sight of that. I do know that business projects, from what I've seen are – we're a little bit ill-disciplined in terms of that discipline” (6:1492-6:1836). A different participant was of the opinion that the project management discipline is utilised during multiple phases of the strategic management process as stated here. *“Look, I think it's probably going to be in execution, mostly because I mean project management – and then also the setting of the strategy is probably a project management process as well” (3:1363-3:1554).*

This organisation has a formal project management framework in place. Participants are of the view that the different business units within this case apply the project management discipline during different phases of the strategic management process, as they deem necessary. The evidence at hand indicates that it is applied during both the strategy formulation and strategy execution phases. However, another participant is of the opinion that even though the project management discipline is utilised during both strategy formulation and strategy execution it is most applied during strategy execution as stated here. *“But the implementation is more pure I think project management than anything else” (3:1594-3:1681).*

6.3.3 Strategy Execution Approach

Within this case there is not a specific strategy execution methodology being applied. There is however an end to end formalised strategic management business framework that has been agreed with all stakeholders with the CEO driving the framework. This is inclusive of strategy execution. This framework is well structured and tightly governed as alluded to *“.... then that business plan again is filtered down into the business to execute on the strategy, but the strategy is linked to the business plan (3:222-3:364).*

Another participant supports this as follows. *“So we have a strategic process that was signed off and formalised with our shareholders. So there's a structured strategy process and it talks around regular, I think it is updates. It is actually quite interesting and our business is going into a new future right now” (3:417-3:850).*

Within this organisation, each business unit is responsible for strategy execution. Furthermore, there are defined processes that require enterprise wide engagement to ensure that the strategy is executed effectively. This is alluded to as follows. *“We’ve got all better at that, so before a product is launched, there is a big cross-functional meeting with the impacts on customer care, and the impact on marketing, and then came from everything else that was discussed (14:927-14:1786).* A different participant supports this accordingly *“We have Monthly Review meetings with the cross-functional and the entire organisation. We have an operational forum running through the projects” (4:1439-4:1581).* We are starting to move towards a lot more of a co-operative organisation” (14:927-14:1786).

The participant concludes by stating that *“governance is very important, so the governance between projects. Managing the inter-dependency between projects is essential, obviously avoiding duplication. Sometimes you know a number of projects might be trying to attempt certain things that are the same and then that governance structure in terms of being able to manage up to an EXCO. Managing up to a board for things like budget approval and then good old fashion programme management, timelines, you know and regular project meetings” (5:1965-5:2484).*

6.3.4 Strategy Execution Reporting

This organisation has an enterprise wide formal in house strategy execution reporting process in place within its governance structure. It is descriptive in nature. The application of this process is stated as follows. *“So we setup an overall framework which we followed from a governance perspective, and then it was more on the normal timing and budget measurements that we used, but the framework was more on everyone across the technical organisations, IT and network and business following the same principles” (7:728-7:1028).*

Within this case, projects are utilised to implement strategy hence the project management governance is an integral part to the strategy execution reporting. This is stated as follows *“Once the strategies go they go into those*

project offices but there's also then high level review. These strategies then go to the EXCO for feedback and for updates, so they do get subpoenaed, or what's the word? Put on the EXCO agenda" (12:1317-12:1615).

These projects are managed based on financial and non-financial metrics as accentuated here. *"The projects are all tracked on timelines obviously and all of that is in place. I think the revenues are backed into the budgets of these projects, so that is there. The return on investment and the performance of these projects once they are alive they are tracked" (7:322-7:845).* Project timelines are managed during project implementation and the return on investment is reported on once the projects have been implemented. These metrics are then compared to the organisations business plan compiled during strategy formulation as alluded to here: *"there is a formal governance strategy agenda which has been baked into our four year business plan, and that gets adhered to religiously" (12:867-12:1240).*

Furthermore, participants within this case are of the opinion that the current strategy execution reporting process requires improvement. They are of the view that tracking and managing the financial indicator reporting is a major area of concern. This is accentuated accordingly. *"Return on investment I think is always a tricky one, and I think this an area where you know any company can have improvement, because it is very, very difficult often to reconcile the true return on investment" (7:322-7:845).* A different participant supports this as follows *"I think the one part that we could have done better was once the project was implemented or the initiative was implemented, to look at performance reviews on it which was left for each business unit. But because the accounting is done on a much more rolled up level, you know, it's hard to say on specific performance of initiatives. So that is the one part where I think certain additional maturity should be looked at and catered for" (11:503-11:1048).*

Even though a formal in house strategy execution reporting process exists within this case, there is a major focus on financial indicators when reporting on strategy execution. This is indicated as follows *"Look like I said, I think it's*

mainly through financial analysis where your projects are assessed and implementation are assessed, but it's mostly over a longer term period it's not short-term" (4:1676-4:1872). Another participant supports this accordingly "The financial limits, that we're very focused on like any good business, but I think it's the non-financial aspects of that we could be better at" (8:1114-8:1261). A different participant also concurred "So from a project point of view they do track and prioritise projects on gross margin contribution and bottom line profit" (8:1645-8:1965). Financial indicators are central in assessing strategy execution effectiveness within this case and is supported with a formal in house strategy execution governance process.

6.4 Project Selection

The initiative or project selection refers to the approach followed when prioritising initiatives or projects undertaken by the organisation to achieve the strategic objectives. A formal well governed initiative or project selection process is followed to decide what initiatives will be implemented by the organisation. This is stated as follows *"new initiatives have to go through quite a rigorous business plan process, and then Investment committee decision making process that goes all the way up to the CEO before execution could happen on that" (8:2083-8:2291).*

The above-mentioned is supported by a different participant that states *"there's a lot of review of current projects, a lot of review of past projects and using all of that stuff to come up with a – based on analysis and approach that you want to adopt, once that approach has been agreed and bought into, you then break it up into effectively a programme of projects" (5:1537-5:1963).*

6.4.1 Project Selection Indicators

Even though this organisation and industry has to comply with laws from a regulatory perspective as alluded to, *"there is a lot of regulatory projects. So I think our organisation is the one that's got the most efficient regulatory project office because it is so lean but it is mean" (9:213-9:375).* Financial feasibility is a major component within the project or initiative selection criteria within this case. This is expressed as follows *"Most projects are selected on return on*

investments which would be different for different areas. So a return on investment for a product would be probably not always revenue, it could be a market disrupting element or a promotional thing, but yes, all of them do get evaluated on its return on investment, is it you know, resources or money” (8:1240-8:1643). This is further supported “so from a project point of view they do track and prioritise projects on gross margin contribution and bottom line profit, and they are wrapped and stacked and prioritised according to those even the whole country is segmented into profitability pockets” (8:1645-8:1965).

A different participant concurs and adds a concern regarding primarily utilising financial feasibility for project or initiative selection. *“There is a forum of the chiefs, now it’s primarily reviewed from an affordability and from a budget perspective, and probably in my opinion, not enough focus given to what actually is the business impact going to be” (4:1277-4:1494). The participant continues by stating that “.... so HR might think their project is really important and networks might think that their project is really important. The reality is only actually one of them is actually really important for the business and this is particularly important in an organisation, as all organisations have where you got limited resources. So you know, everyone’s got their view of the world, and then there’s the actual view of the world, so we need to be more vigorous in terms of how we apply limited resources (9:565-9:1149)”. The participant continues by accentuating that “we don’t have a vigorous enough company-wide view of projects. Projects are initiated and justified in a particular function, that function will then go to whatever appropriate forum to justify it and it’ll get approved. My concern is that we do not look at those business-wide” (9:218-9:563).*

Another participant is of the view that despite the formal project or initiative selection processes that are in place, the organisations CEO is very influential in determining what projects will be executed. This is alluded to as follows: *“in our organisation, we got a very dominant CEO very influential CEO” (12:1462-12:1556). A different participant supports this and comments accordingly “other project initiatives, so obviously there were I would call the, business as*

usual functions which normally got shifted around depending on other higher priorities. New product introductions are always fairly high up on the priority list and then obviously the CEO specific projects that had to be executed” (8:844-8:1161). Another participant confirms the above-mentioned by expressing that “we’ve got a very strongly character CEO, he makes a number of statements, and on the back of those statements we implement some projects to implement what we think is the strategy” (4:441-4:730).

The selection of projects is mainly based on financial feasibility within this case even though a formal criterion is prescribed. Within the organisation the selection of the strategic projects or initiatives does not influence strategy execution due to the sound CEO led governance and rigorous process applied to the project or initiative selection approach. Furthermore, once projects or initiatives are selected they are well governed during implementation. This is accentuated as follows “.... and I think the challenge of specifically strategic projects is that they are – a lot of times they induce different thinking and different practices and change, and there will always be resistance and you know so in our business I think the good news is that our CEO is very strong sponsor of these projects” (11:614-11:1036).

6.5 Change Management

Change management in this context refers to how changes resulting from the strategy being executed are disseminated and managed throughout the entire organisation (Hrebiniak, 2006:24-25; Salih and Doll, 2013:33). Hrebiniak (2006:24-25) and Salih and Doll (2013:36) are of the view that a major obstacle to strategy execution is an organisations failure to conduct effective change management.

6.5.1 Change Management Impact

Change management within this case is regarded as being very important to strategy execution. This is emphasised as follows “so change management for me depends on how you define change management. So if it is organisational change management, especially as organisations transform into digital transformation. Change management should play a pivotal role in

the overall strategy, because you cannot move the business from one specific view into a new era of where the company wants to be without cultural change (11:1171-11:1684).

However, participants commented as to whether change management was evident and the manner in which it is applied within this organisation provided contrasting views: This is stated accordingly *“So we don’t have change management” (16:1048-16:1082)*. The participant continues by mentioning that *“So we’ve got a customer care function, we’ve got a training organisation that does the job of change management; do we do effective change management as part of strategy? no” (16:1108-16:1598)*.

A different participant provided the subsequent understanding of change management within the organisation. *“Our change management gets driven by our CEO. He plays a very, very disciplined role with strategy, him and the chiefs (senior management team). That’s how change management gets – so it’s really, really driven by the stakeholders of the strategy” (13:610-13:835)*. The participant continued by mentioning that *“there is very good communication” (13:923-13:962)*. Another participant stated, *“I don’t know, I really don’t know” (9:783-9:815)*.

Within this case, there is no indication that formal change management initiatives are utilised within this organisation during strategy execution however training is provided as alluded to above.

6.5.2 Communication

Within this case, the participants provided different opinions regarding communication during strategy execution. They concurred that communication is happening but disagreed on the effectiveness of the communication. This is highlighted as follows *“we have a fairly unstructured communication process around that people kind of hear what the CEO said, and so they’ll be very cognisant of that to their day to work and they’ll get busy and do what is filtered down” (15:736-15:1054)*. A different participant supports the above-mentioned as follows *“I don’t think there is enough done with it, you know, the*

way that it gets communicated needs to be reviewed” (16:2237-16:2347). Another participant stated “no, no there is very good communication” (13:923-13:962). One other participant indicated that “I think there’s a lot of – I mean the lifecycle where this business is at the moment I think there’s a lot of information that is not being shared and that’s one of our strategic initiatives, is communication with stakeholders” (7:1138-7:1368).

Conversely, the participants who were concerned about the effectiveness of communication provided reasons. A participant emphasised the following regarding communication to be addressed by this organisation. *“You know the successful companies have done that, the bottom layers have been quite involved in the process of new things and new ideas. So, if there is a closeness and people’s voices get shutdown, you’re not going to get the buy-in. Then you can publish it, you can talk about it until you’re blue in the face, actually nothing is preventing people from not executing it” (17:272-17:651).*

This participant continues by mentioning that *“If there is this openness that there is views and viewpoints that can go up. Companies also should become more agile in their thinking, which you see with Facebook and the others. Then you would not have such a problem with communication because everyone is inclusive of the strategic process and I think part of it is we’re still to silo and hierarchical in the strategic process” (17:653-17:1117).* This is supported by a different participant, *“so people will sometimes think oh, strategy is this big thing from the head office, ivory tower and we must wait for that to get anything done. No, it’s incorrect. Yes, that’s part of it, but it’s also very important that people at their own level, senior, mid and lower level, have a problem identification, problem resolution and problem fixing ability” (15:1465-15:1829).*

Within this case, there is no information to what levels the strategy is communicated within the organisation. Furthermore, what the strategy translates to for employees is not effectively communicated within this organisation. Participants are of the view employees must be involved during strategy formulation to obtain their commitment later during the strategy

execution process. It is alluded to as follows. *“So I think it’s just corporation, the normal I think corporate stuff, co-operation, breaking down the silos, communication, that type of stuff which is very prevalent here. It’s endemic in the culture, so it’s something that we are actually trying to change”* (9:1168-9:1431). They emphasise that communication is pivotal not only during strategy execution but during the entire strategic management process.

6.6 Organisational Architecture

The manner in which organisational architecture is managed in relation to strategy execution is discussed below.

6.6.1 Organisational Architecture Impact

The manner in which the organisation is structured in executing strategy is crucial within this case. A participant illustrates this in the following manner. *“I think our business is very structured in terms of the key operating departments and that’s how our networks work. So your network team is – so it does play a big role and for the right reasons. Because to drive a project or a strategy can have massive network ramifications. So you find that the organisational architecture plays a huge role”* (10:1242-10:1653). The participant continues by stating that *“It’s massive, so because of that capital investment. The organisational architecture plays a big role to make sure that you don’t go in the wrong direction”* (11:214-11:372).

Another participant supports the above-mentioned by commenting, *“It should play a very strong role, and this is one of the things that was lacking when I took over the CIO role at the company. Unless you can, especially align your architecture to strategy you’re not going to have an optimised platform that enables business. So, if your architecture is not aligned to strategy it’s just costing you more in the end”* (9:1537-9:1947). This participant continues by asserting that *“so the first thing is to understand what you are being Digital Telco company from the strategic point of view and then restructure your resources around that. It’s fine if you’re now just going to be big fat happy pipe, you know BT (British Telecommunications) is the wealthiest big fat*

happy pipe in the world and they are operationally structured to manage it better” (13:1891-13:2236).

Within this case, the processes as well as tools and techniques are adapted as required to ensure effective strategy execution. This is due to the organisation wanting to remain relevant within the industry and the greater business environment. This is described accordingly by a participant *“you know what makes this industry or this business exciting about the future is it is an industry that’s going to evolve in the next ten years radically. You know it’s going to give us opportunities to change our position fundamentally in the Industry. You know that the industry is evolving and the mobile is the platform that actually plays the catalyst where the transformation happens” (2:1207-2:1753).*

A different participant concurs with this in addressing the current shortcoming within the organisation and states the following. *“We now need to start making its ability to ensure the business is a lot more available. Now organisationally what that is going to probably require is, the functions outside of the strategy function, will now need to start making resources available and that doesn’t necessarily need to be full time resources, but almost like a matrix organisation, where people can be available part time for specific projects and programmes” (13:980-13:1414).*

In addition to the above, a different participant provides another view regarding the role of organisational architecture during strategy execution within the organisation. He is of the opinion that *“architecture is probably – I mean most businesses are set up similar. I think it’s mainly – it’s not necessarily the structure of the business that influences, more the culture of the business and the culture of co-operation” (7:538-7:766).*

A different participant is of the view that *“one of the biggest challenges that I see in strategy execution is the telco players try to be, the be all and end all and want to own every single product. I think partly the Country Club of the telco players in the GSMA (Global System Mobile Association) is partly to*

blame because everything gets given an “M” word. You know, so now it was Mobile Money, then it is Mobile Agriculture then it’s Mobile Health” (13:626-13:1028). This introduces further complexity to adapting the organisational architecture for relevance to the changing demands from the commercial world.

This organisation has undergone significant changes regarding business models resulting in staff attrition. Participants are of the opinion that the organisation is moving in a profitable business direction and is in need to have a more dynamic approach to strategy execution. By ensuring that the organisational architecture is aligned to the strategic direction of the organisation. Furthermore, this requires a collaborative enterprise wide culture change within the organisation.

6.6.2 Organisational Alignment

Within this case the respective business units are responsible for executing their projects in relation to the strategy. *“The strategy is cross-functional and across the business and the responsibility lies within the business to do it. So out of a project management point of view, we just see that the business implement it and so and the business is quite capable of doing it at the moment” (8:1168-8:1491),* However, there is alignment between the respective business units to ensure the strategy is effectively executed. *“We have three I would say project offices and then they all work together” (7:1517-7:1881).* Each project office performs an end-to-end project management function during strategy execution.

The reason for the collaboration is due to the governance process implemented within this organisation as stipulated by a participant. *“So we setup an overall framework which we followed from a governance perspective, and then it was more on the normal timing and budget measurements that we used. But the framework was more on everyone across the technical organisations, IT and network and business following the same principles” (7:728-7:1028).*

The enterprise wide alignment of strategy execution within this case is functioning according plan. This is credited to the governance process instituted by the organisation. In pursuit of continuous improvement, this organisation is assessing the feasibility to implement a dedicated strategy office independent of the CEO office, which currently performs this role. This will ensure a greater reach with more resources being able to ensure enterprise wide oversight in terms of strategy execution.

6.6.3 Competencies

Due to commercial challenges this organisation has faced it has experienced a significant turnover of staff. This is commented as follows, *“I think if you look at turnaround of people the challenge is the “knowledge transfer” and the “skill-set.” I think that is the biggest challenge that we have faced, we’ve had massive turnaround and you know turnover of people”* (6:673-6:906). This has resulted in a loss of intellectual capital and institutional memory not only to execute the strategy but the daily operations within this case as well. This loss of organisational experience has hampered effective strategy execution. This is described as follows *“so obviously there was a lot of restructuring and optimisation and when you have that, and you need to look at other critical roles versus a project management role, you just overload your project managers”* (7:305-7:572).

Due to the restructuring as mentioned above, the organisation experienced a shortage of staff that hampered strategy execution. This is described accordingly *“so very often, particularly, in a resource constraint environment you’ll have the need to execute a project, but you need line staff to do that. You don’t have the comfort or luxury of dedicated project people”* (20:658-20:1110). The participant continues by stating that *“Yes, because you very often you got a guy that’s running a call centre, that’s a very busy job, but I need him to implement a project for me as well – so how? - and business has had this problem for a long time. Is that how do I free up people to from their line roles to help execute strategic projects”* (20:1212-20:1521).

At the time of this interview, the organisation had embarked on a recruitment drive that targeted highly skilled staff in order to compensate for the loss of the intellectual capital and institutional memory. Furthermore, they utilise contract-specialised skills as mentioned, *“You know the nature of our projects is so diverse, you know, what you typically would find is you do engage a project. Is that you would approach a consultant that would help you with the specialist skills and techniques in that type of project to assist”* (3:1430-3:1733). The participant continues by stating, *“so we do use a lot of external consultants in the big strategic projects because of the nature of those projects”* (3:1735-3:1849).

According to a participant, the organisation is recruiting good permanent employees as well. This is emphasised accordingly *“I do think the quality of people we definitely have is our strength. So I think we have got the right skills now. A lot of people come to join the business because of this innovation type of business that it is, and the learning they’re going to have. So you get people with good quality skills coming to want to work and so we have a long list of people wanting to join our business. I think that helps us to build the skills”* (11:1188-11:1662).

In employing these highly skilled individuals this organisation is gearing itself for the future commercial demands of the industry. This is illustrated in the following manner: *“Now you have radical thinking people who are already operating in their personal capacity in the new way”* (15:864-15:1303), In addition to this at a management level, employees within this case are highly skilled and possess the relevant academic qualifications for the job at hand. They have a combination of organisational and industry experience. Furthermore, they possess the experience for their required roles, which is managing strategy execution as referred to in Table 6-1. From a leadership and operational perspective, this organisation is resourcing itself for the future demands of the business world. This is primarily because of lessons learnt during previous commercial challenges and the leadership support from the CEO.

6.6.4 Project Management Tools

Within this case, there is no one standard for utilising tools and techniques during strategy execution. The participants are of the opinion that the organisation is flexible in this regard. One of the participants stated the following *“so it depended on the specific project itself. If it was say a new tariff that got introduced that was pretty much followed with standard IT project management. Aligning the product teams, the Customer Care team’s requirements with a Business Analyst and following normal Microsoft Project Office”* (3:1582-3:1887). The participant continues by stating that *“when it was looking at new strategic execution projects like the launch of a virtual network. there we utilised Enterprise Programme Management methodologies and techniques”* (3:1889-3:2085).

A different participant supports the above-mentioned accordingly. *“Whether specific techniques are being used, you know the nature of our projects is so diverse, you know, what you typically would find is you do engage a project is that you would approach a consultant that would help you with the specialist skills and techniques in that type of project to assist”* (3:1430-3:1733).

Whether the tools and techniques utilised during strategy execution are ideal or not is not actively monitored or reviewed from an organisational perspective. This is because the organisation was embracing higher priority commercial challenges. It is stated accordingly *“I think this is not a strong element of our business right now, and I truly believe it’s because of the phase of our business that it is in, it is re-invent and re-pitch”* (5:2111-5:2290). Furthermore, a different participant supports this view accordingly. *“If we felt it wasn’t working then there was a review on it. I mean the company just didn’t have sufficient resourcing to get into it I would say that level of governance structures, because it’s a very lean organisation”* (6:953-6:1185).

In addition to the above the participant continues by stating that in the participant’s mind *“the challenge wasn’t necessarily with tools and techniques. It was more on the number of different projects running concurrently at a given*

point in time which sometimes prioritisation was the biggest challenge. That we had to deal with” (6:1347-6:1673).

This organisation utilises a number of different tools and techniques during strategy execution. It has a very dynamic approach to the application of tools and techniques during strategy execution. The respective projects will utilise the appropriate tools, as they deem necessary for a particular project or initiative that will ensure they achieve the desired objective for their project. The employees are empowered to decide what the most suitable tools and techniques are that must be utilised during strategy execution. At no stage did any of the participants indicate that the training of employees to utilise the tools and techniques as being an area of concern. If the tools were not appropriate, they simply applied another tool in pursuit of the ultimate objective.

6.6.5 Culture

Based on the above-mentioned the organisation has instilled a culture of innovation as alluded to by a participant *“we are a disruptor so it’s a lot of maverick type and high innovation projects” (5:252-5:375).* The above-mentioned is supported accordingly *“it’s actually challenging the status quo and the paradigm of project management, which has brought the scene into a new project mode and understanding and skill-set” (6:1709-6:1945).* The participant continues by stating that *“so I think if you look at the maturity in the future you probably would support the agility and the specific needs of our business right now to be ahead of all our competitors on innovation, I think that’s why it has evolved to this way” (8:396-8:657).*

A different participant is of the view that *“most businesses are set up similar. I think it’s mainly – it’s not necessarily the structure of the business that influences more the culture of the business and the culture of co-operation” (7:538-7:766).* This is supported by another participant that emphasises that *“you cannot move the business from one specific view into a new era of where the company wants to be without Cultural change” (11:1171-11:1684).* The participant continues by asserting *“so cultural change needs to be re-aligned*

strategically where the company is going” (16:235-16:1566). Another participant supports this “so I think for this industry a massive threat because they cannot think different and that’s the biggest – because you’re talking about execution here. The challenge is that you could be split internally by people who will believe in the old way, and people who are seeing the new way if you don’t have everyone in your business truly buying in” (15:263-15:829). Within this case, the realigning of the organisational culture to goals of the organisation is proving a challenge now.

6.7 Conclusion

The table below provides a positive and negative summary of the dimensions discussed pertaining to the role of project management during strategy execution within this case. Table 6-3 below is followed by a detailed description of the findings.

Table 6-3: Case C – Within Case Analysis Summary

Dimension	Positive	Negative
<i>Process Approach</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Well defined processes. - Corporate process ownership. - Defined <i>project management</i> discipline utilised. - Central <i>project management</i> oversight provided. - Dynamic utilisation of <i>project management</i> depending on the type of project. - Sound <i>project management</i> governance. - CEO provides strategic direction and oversight. - End to end defined strategic management process. - Sound <i>Strategy Execution</i> governance. - Project management utilised during strategy execution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decentralised project management function. - No formal <i>strategy execution</i> methodology. - Individual departments driving strategy execution.
<i>Project Selection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formal criteria. - Centralised EXCO prioritisation. - Sound governance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial based primarily.
<i>Change Management</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training is provided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No formal interventions. - Lack of effective <i>communication</i> of strategy.

Dimension	Positive	Negative
Organisational Architecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Realignment of Organisational Architecture awareness. - Interdepartmental alignment. - A number of tools are utilised. - Dynamic application of tools. - Highly skilled and empowered employees. - Sound organisational capability. - Innovative disruptor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of proactive organisational structure realignment. - Resource constraints. - Staff overloaded with work. - Lack of culture realignment.

This organisation does not have a dedicated unit managing strategy execution due to the lean resource structure of the organisation. Within this case, no formal strategy execution methodology is followed. However, the organisation has a structured strategy formulation and strategy execution framework in place, which are well governed. Each business unit is responsible for strategy execution. Furthermore, there is significant cross-functional engagement to ensure cross-functional alignment with oversight driven by CEO.

This organisation does not apply a standard project management approach. It utilises a fit for purpose approach in applying project management as well as tools and techniques during strategy execution to align to the demands of the project. The different business units within this case apply the project management discipline during different phases of the strategic management process, as they deem necessary.

The evidence at hand indicates that it is applied during both the strategy formulation and strategy execution phases but more so during the strategy execution phase.

Within this case the selection of the strategic projects or initiatives, rely primarily on financial feasibility in conjunction with regulatory projects that

must be implemented. Even though a formal criteria is prescribed. Strategy execution within this case is not influenced by selection due to the sound governance and rigorous process applied to the project or initiative selection approach.

Participants are of the opinion that organisational architecture is pivotal to ensuring that strategy execution is managed effectively. Within this case, the organisation is not optimally resourced for strategy execution at this point. In addition to this communication within this case is a concern. Furthermore, participants are of the view that the organisation needs to communicate the strategy enterprise wide to ensure buy in from all employees to ensure effective strategy execution. Change management requires focus within this case and must be utilised to effect culture change. This is to ensure that the organisation aligns its culture with the strategic positioning that the organisation envisages, in order to ensure effective strategy execution.

Chapter 7 : Within Case Analysis – Case D

This chapter provides a detailed account of the within case analysis for Case D. The company background is provided thereafter the data production approach is discussed. The respective themes are analysed and a conclusion of the within case analysis is provided.

7.1 Company Background

This company is a Johannesburg Securities Exchange listed organisation that sells innovative technology for mobile commerce to emerging markets in South Africa and abroad. Their roots are in South Africa and they have grown their provision of telecommunications services significantly. They are renowned for being very entrepreneurial within the South African telecommunications landscape.

7.2 Data Collection Approach

The manner in which the data was collected and produced is discussed below.

7.2.1 Interviews

Three senior executives involved in strategy execution were interviewed at their organisations premises during the third quarter of 2017. Two of the participants have significant working and technical experience within the industry. The remaining participant is relatively new to the telecommunications industry but has vast experience within the organisations target market. Academically all the participants possess the necessary qualifications to perform their duties. Below find Table 7-1 summarising the background of the interviewees.

Table 7-1: Case D - Participant Profiles

#	Job Title	Description
1	Chief Information Officer	This participant is on the committee responsible for strategy execution within this organisation. This person is an industrial engineer by qualification and has been in the telecommunications industry for a significant number

		of years in various roles.
2	Chief Operating Officer	This participant is fairly new to the telecommunications industry and this organisation. This person holds a Masters in Business Leadership degree. Furthermore, this participant has a very experienced operational transformation background pertaining to strategy execution. He is currently responsible for managing the business operational strategy and the identified projects for the organisation.
3	Executive: Product Management	This participant is responsible for managing the product strategy and implementation of these products via projects within this organisation. This participant has an Information Systems degree and has worked within the telecommunications sector for a substantial number of years.

7.2.2 Documentation

This organisations annual financial reports were reviewed for further information pertaining to this study. The participants were not comfortable in sharing any other documentation. They were of the opinion that these documents contain strategic sensitive information that could be a valuable source of information to competitors if availed in the public domain. This included process and procedure documentation. Below find Table 7-2 containing the list of documents reviewed.

Table 7-2: Case D – Document List

#	Name	Description
1	Annual Financial Report 2015/2016	The report provides a detailed account to the stakeholders of its controls, strategy, and organisational performance for the financial year. Furthermore, it also provides a business outlook for the future.
2	Annual Financial	The report provides a detailed account to the

	Report 2016/2017	stakeholders of its controls, strategy, and organisational performance for the financial year. Furthermore, it also provides a business outlook for the future.
3	Prioritisation Matrix	This document contains the prioritisation criteria for projects or initiatives that is utilised to determine its importance.

7.2.3 Observations

The participants displayed great knowledge regarding the project management and strategy execution concepts, their purpose and how these are applied within the organisation. They acknowledged that strategy execution is a major challenge within the organisation. They were keen on improving the current processes utilised by the organisation to ensure successful strategy execution.

The section that follows discusses the themes identified within this case. Firstly, the process approach is analysed. Thereafter the way project selection is conducted is reviewed. The role of change management, organisational architecture and organisational capability is also addressed. Lastly, the culture shift within this case is examined.

7.3 Process Approach

The processes followed during strategy execution are discussed below.

7.3.1 Corporate Process Ownership

This case has no clear documented business strategy in place as stated by a participant *“Okay first of all I think we are somewhat unique, you know I think by your question you assume we do have a strategy, and I think the first prize is that we don’t have a strategy” (3:215-3:404)*. Furthermore, it has no structured strategy formulation and strategy execution processes in place. It is alluded to as follows by a participant *“So look, the problem we have I guess in*

all businesses is the definition of a strategy and then how do you actually monitor and measure that going forward” (11:400-11:558).

This organisation has no specific department managing strategy execution due to the entrepreneurial culture of the organisation as stated by a participant *“No, there is no department” (10:216-10:242).* Each department is responsible for executing their own strategy as alluded to by a participant *“All of them” (9:892-9:903).* A different participant concurs by stating, *“no, every business unit head is responsible for the execution and those aren’t necessarily always aligned which is part of the problem” (8:1297-8:1475).*

There is an attempt by the CEO to drive governance but this tends to create uncertainty as mentioned by a different participant *“It tends to roll back to the group level. The CEO and senior management each have their own areas of responsibility and sometimes there is some conflict....” (8:1590-8:1781).* Below Figure 7-1 displays the corporate process structure within this organisation.

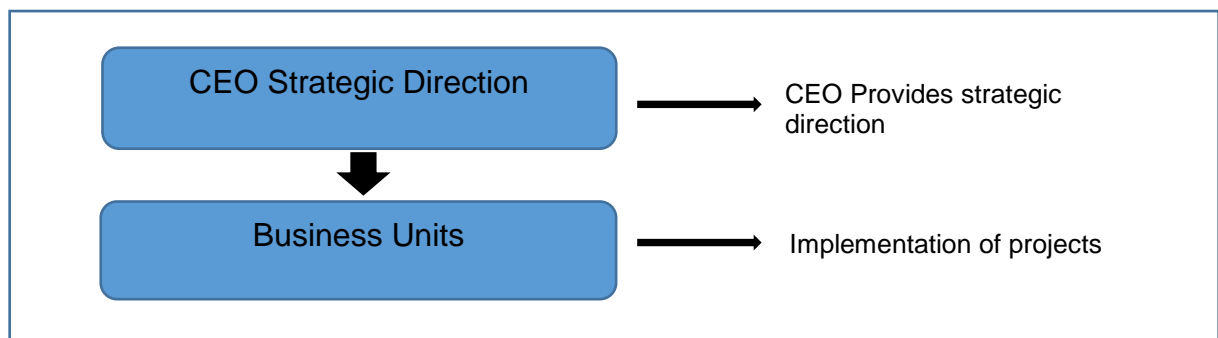


Figure 7-1: Case D – Corporate Process Ownership

Within this case, processes are loosely defined and not documented. Even though there is a lack of corporate process ownership regarding strategy execution this organisation has a project management office responsible for executing commercial projects. However, this office does not support the entire organisation as stated by a participant *“So we’ve never had a consolidated project or programme view or whatever the case is” (6:218-6:435).* Furthermore, this participant also alluded to the fact that the process is not functioning effectively by stating that *“I think reporting invisibility on what’s*

going on under the hood and what people are focusing on, and who is focusing on what and you know what the priorities are” (6:562-6:728).

7.3.2 Project Management Approach

A structured project management office is utilised to manage projects within this organisation. A number of project management disciplines are utilised within this case as alluded to by a participant *“So it’s a combination of PMBOK and PRINCE” (4:365-4:394).* In addition to the above-mentioned the organisation is also experimenting with an agile methodology as alluded to *“So we developed our own methodology really aligned to those two, we’re trying to move to a more agile – move away from a waterfall project into, I guess looking and using some of the Japanese manufacturing techniques” (4:488-4:707).*

This is an indication that the organisation is in pursuit of a project management discipline that would allow them to execute their projects more effectively. The above-mentioned is highlighted as follows by a participant *“I don’t necessarily agree with we then get stuck into a bit of a documentation cycle where nothing happens until documentation is completed” (3:1523-3:1664).* The participant continues by stating that *“Well I think it’s just as a result of nobody coming in with a very clear approach in saying, we are following Agile, we’re going to do it this way and that’s how we need to do it” (4:218-4:400).*

The centralised project management office is utilised to ensure the communication of projects across the organisation as described by a participant *“So you can’t rely on individual business units necessarily, owning and driving what they need to do, you still need some sort of a central Unit that’s coordinating and pulling activities together” (13:563-13:763).* A different participant concurs by stating *“So we have a monthly meeting with the business just to align I guess across, so there’s a monthly meeting with each business unit where they validate priorities or projects. Then there’s a monthly meeting with all the business units together where we explain what we’re*

doing in each business unit and try and address any conflicts across projects” (6:922-6:1287).

Even though formal project management disciplines are being utilised within this case. These disciplines are applied in a fit for purpose manner. This is asserted as follows by a participant *“I think it’s been suggested here and there and everywhere that maybe we should do this and try this and do that, etcetera, and that is why we’re sitting with a bit of a hybrid” (4:402-4:580).* The participant continues by stating that *“But I think there is definitely a desire to be more Agile” (4:858-4:915).* Another participant supports the above-mentioned by stating that *“Okay, so project management where we’re right at that phase funny enough now, and the way I’m setting up – so we’ve moved from calling it – we used the term Project X through the analytical phase, the three month analytical phase” (4:399-4:638).*

With a formalised project management office in place, the participants were in the same frame of mind regarding the state of governance for the projects being executed. This is alluded to as follows by a participant *“so within our environment very poorly. I think the “handover” from Programme Office/IT back into the business is we can do a lot better, again, I’m not apportioning blame, I think it is on both sides of the fence where that process can be managed a lot better. So they operationalised poorly” (8:1343-8:1653).* A different participant responsible for providing input to effective strategy execution emphasised this by asserting that *“No there’s none” (7:1274-7:1289)* when asked about the level of project management governance within this organisation.

The participants within this case concurred that the project management discipline is only applied during the strategy execution stage. This is stated as follows *“so I think my understanding of programme office, I only get involved in the, you know, once things are very much decided around the execution of it” (4:1272-4:1421).* It is further emphasised by the participant as follows *“You know I think when it comes to strategy execution there’s a view that’s*

described or agreed at the top, but you know they need to then we will execute it” (13:404-13:561).

A project management discipline is being utilised during the strategy execution phase of the project only within this case. This is done via a formal project management office that exists within this organisation. Different project management disciplines are applied within this case. The participants are also of the opinion that this office is not functioning as desired and expected from a project management standards perspective and the process must be improved. Furthermore, there is a lack of sound project management governance within this case. Although the project governance structures and defined processes are in place, the evidence indicates that the utilisation of project management discipline does not effectively aid strategy execution.

7.3.3 Strategy Execution Approach

The participants are of the opinion that effective strategy execution is vital to a sustainable business as expressed *“Strategy execution, so it is absolutely an enabler” (7:1369-7:1543)*. A different participant concurs by mentioning that *“the greatest Strategies aren’t executed, and as per our earlier conversation what’s always interested me is, I would have said devising strategy is the harder part and executing the easiest, and in fact it is the other way around” (13:778-13:1018)*. The participant continues by emphasising the importance of effective strategy execution *“every organisation is battling with the same question, is execution number one?” (14:1146-14:1365)*.

Despite the criticality of effective strategy execution as alluded to by the participants. Within this case there is no strategy execution methodology utilised as alluded to *“So from a Group perspective there is no real methodology” (3:301-3:357)*. In addition to this, there is not an end-to-end formalised strategic management business framework, for strategy execution that has been agreed upon, across the organisation. This is asserted in the following manner *“So I’d say, number one, clear strategy, clear goals clearly defined and having everybody on board and aligned, and then we touched on it earlier but having a sort of performance management, you know having*

everyone's goals talking to that strategy which we lack" (10:1567-10:1835). In addition to this each business unit is responsible for strategy execution as stated by a participant "every business unit head is responsible for the execution" (8:1297-8:1475) hence with no formal methodology there is no strategy execution alignment within this case.

What hampers effective strategy execution is that this organisation has no clear strategy as emphasised *"So, you know, so first of all you know the role I'm performing now is – and what we have just done is we're finally getting ourselves to the point where we do – starting to develop a strategy because there isn't one" (3:788-3:1031). Due to a lack of a definitive strategic direction, there is a lack of focus in managing strategy execution as described by the participant: "Well you know I think the biggest problem is that when you don't have clear strategic thrust or strategy everything else wobbles from there. So it's like having no foundation, and because the strategic thrusts or the focus is not clear everything off that you know doesn't operate because people I find are operating at a very transactional level" (6:1353-6:1705).*

A different participant concurs by stating that *"So I think first of all having a strategy and then clearly articulating that strategy and making sure everybody understands and supports that strategy, so that we're all going in the right direction" (10:213-10:415).*

With no strategy, execution methodology within this case the execution governance is an area that is lacking. This is highlighted as follows *"Currently within our environment, not, but I think going forward will be by some form of a Steering Committee that oversees the execution" (10:219-10:348). A different participant agrees by stating, "There's no governance around it" (9:212-9:263). Another participant concurs by stating that "As far as I'm concerned when it comes to strategy you should have some sort of a Steering Committee that directs or guides the implementation of that strategy. Makes key decisions, etcetera, but then in terms of executing it is cross functional from IT to Finance to Marketing, to Operations to everywhere. You can't do them in*

isolation, unless the strategy is very much focused in a particular functional area” (9:1116-9:1540).

7.3.4 Strategy Execution Reporting

Within this case, the participants concur that strategy execution reporting is based on financial reporting only. This is asserted in the following manner by a participant *“It’s purely a numbers game” (11:1541-11:1567)*. The participant continues by emphasising this as follows *“So it is, it’s a numbers game, it’s around, here’s a business we think we like the people who run it. We think they can add to our bottom line. We think they will create a new channel to market, so let’s go and buy them” (11:1714-11:1964)*. A different participant complements the above by mentioning, *“The budget effectively is the strategy” (10:425-10:463)*.

Due to no defined strategy within this case, there is a lack of focus regarding effective strategy execution reporting. Hence, this organisation only measures the manner in which initiatives are executed on a financial basis as asserted *“So I think if you’ve got a strategy you’ve got to be able to measure it, you know, measure your execution against that strategy. And here the strategy is “grow” by 20% a year” (11:1040-11:1218)*.

7.4 Project Selection

The initiative or project selection refers to the approach followed when prioritising initiatives or projects undertaken to achieve the strategic objectives. This is discussed below.

7.4.1 Project Selection Indicators

Within this organisation, there are biannual prioritisation meetings as alluded to by a participant *“from a technique perspective I guess we try and get together every sort of six months and look at what’s happening in the various areas of the business. Therefore, it’s more around paper exercise. So it’s more of a consultative “brown paper” exercise and that ends up into “prioritisation” (3:1685-3:1976)*. The prioritisation during these meetings is based on a formal prioritisation matrix per project as described by a

participant “we have a prioritisation template and then we execute that against a project plan” (3:1978-3:2058). The participant continues by stating that “and then there’s a prioritisation matrix in determining the value of the project which assists the prioritisation” (6:1289-6:1404). Below find the example of this matrix.

Prioritisation Matrix			
Overall Priority	Metric	Weight	Priority Score 1 = V. Low ; 5 = V. High
1	Revenue Generation	30%	1
1	Cost Reduction	25%	2
1	Risk Avoidance	25%	3
3	User Experience	20%	5
	Overall weighted-average Priority Score	100%	2.6

Figure 7-2: Case D – Prioritisation Matrix

A different participant complements the above-mentioned “we leverage a scoring on any ideas that come through and obviously any initiative idea that comes through we’ve got an innovation funnel that we have defined, and we essentially push ideas through that funnel. If they don’t meet as a particular threshold or the business case as a stack-up then we don’t proceed with that, which means we don’t hand it over to the programme office for execution at any point in time” (7:680-7:1105).

The prioritisation of projects within this organisation is based on total value to the organisation as described by a participant: “So we work with the Project Managers within the different business units to define I guess a business case for each project and that goes into prioritisation matrix based on net present value, return on investment, risk, customer service, risk to other projects, improving the value proposition and some of it is tactical around just putting in our product that will defend us against our competitors. So it’s really a prioritisation approach based on value” (7:444-7:911).

A different participant concurs and elaborates on the analysis required in completing the prioritisation matrix *“no well, you know what we, the approach that we’ve just used is that we did a full diagnostics starting – we started basically at the whole Industry level and then into the Telecoms industry and we filtered it down and we sliced the Industry up”* (7:1738-7:1986). The participant continues by mentioning that *“Then you know out of that we looked at. Then we looked at the internal capability organisation, the bottom-up and we looked at the top-down, the size or the prize and then we looked at our competitors and other players in the Industry. Then out of that we said, right, where do we need to play in this Industry? And then what do we need to do to win?”* (8:229-8:591).

The selection of the right projects is important within this organisation as alluded to *“No, no, no I think you know, you’ve got to select the right, you’ve got to, you know look, you’ve got to select – make sure that you know through the diagnostic phase you do select the right focus areas”* (9:653-9:861). Another participant supports this *“So it’s massive. So the process of selecting projects influences”* (7:1270-7:1332). The importance of selecting the right projects is emphasised as follows by a different participant *“I guess one of our biggest threats is we run at very, very small margins and that often the execution of the strategy requires an investment. I don’t think we necessarily always understand what the return on investment is going to be. So that’s probably the biggest threat is that we make a big investment and it doesn’t provide the return”* (10:951-10:1302).

Within this case, there is a structured prioritisation of projects approach, which contains both qualitative and quantitative criteria. There is a consolidated bi-annual process to review the projects. However, this process is not well governed. In addition to this, the selection of the appropriate projects or initiatives influences strategy execution due to the small profitability margins that this organisation relies on.

7.5 Change Management

Change management in terms of how the organisation manages changes because of new projects or initiatives are discussed below.

7.5.1 Change Management Impact

Change management within this case is considered as being critical to strategy execution. This is asserted as follows by a participant *“Change Management, getting the people on board because I think they’re the most critical component to then executing on that, and getting their buy-in”* (10:1411-10:1565). The participant continues *“So I think the role of change management is critical for any change, even you know aside from strategy execution just generally, but obviously strategy execution depending on the nature of the changes, change management it is massive”* (10:683-10:928).

Conversely, within this organisation change management is not performed effectively. The challenges are highlighted accordingly *“unfortunately some of the people just believe the business or the communities must just adopt the change that gets thrust upon them and there’s no need to drive a formal change process, but that’s where most projects fail, because you don’t have proper change management”* (9:735-9:1011). The participant continues by stating that *“So there it’s just everybody believes it’s business as usual and you know, get on with it”* (9:1168-9:1259).

The participant is of the view that *“Change management is everything, and I don’t think we spend enough time focusing on the change management”* (9:530-9:648). Furthermore, from an organisational perspective there has been a lack of focus as alluded to *“In my view is that a “fool with a tool is still a fool.” So I don’t think we’ve got the wrong, necessarily the wrong project management people but we haven’t been able to drive the right change management”* (5:1756-5:1963).

Within this case there are no formal change management initiatives instituted within this organisation during strategy execution. The reason being is that change management has not been a focus area for the organisation. All the

participants acknowledge this even though they believe that change management is vital to strategy execution. However, the organisation is planning to address this going forward *“well in this case it’s going to be huge. So what I’ve got is two change management experts and I was lucky enough, they will be, they’re consultants at the moment but they’re highly experienced and it’s going to be a huge element of it”* (10:733-10:974).

7.5.2 Communication

Participants within this case provided a unified view regarding communication within this organisation during strategy execution. They concurred that communication is happening but it is not very effective and has not been a focus area within the organisation. It is alluded to as follows *“so currently we don’t, as an organisation we communicate very poorly”* (11:223-11:293). The participant continues by stating that *“So communication is key and I think it’s been one of our problems and challenges in the past”* (11:351-11:445). A different participant supports this issue by mentioning that *“disseminate it to the, even if it’s just to your leadership team. A lot of the deals get done that you only find out about at the end of the day, and find out what your role is in it, so yes”* (10:517-10:711). Another participant states the issues with effective communication as follows: *“Number three it is about getting everybody on the same page you know and the biggest thing that you learn through the communication, you can’t tell a person once, you’ve got to tell the same person ten times and you’ve got to use the right language, you’ve got to use consistent language”* (13:1020-13:1315).

Another participant continues by highlighting that the participant cannot understand the reluctance of organisations to communicate the strategic plans throughout the organisation. In fear of competitors obtaining sight of these plans. The participant is of the view that it will still require execution competence to effect these plans and describes this in the following manner *“well you know, I’m always a firm believer, you know that if I pick up a competitor strategic document it doesn’t mean I can do anything with it. And that’s the point, you know and you know so therefore what, you know?”* (11:1127-11:1351).

Within this organisation, the participants do believe that communication is an important factor contributing to the effectiveness of strategy execution. This is described in the following manner *“you’ve got to mobilise the people through the communication strategy” (10:1447-10:1517)*. The participant continues by stating *“across, throughout, you’ve got to communicate at various levels across the organisation and through the organisation” (11:777-11:896)*. Despite the importance of communication as alluded to above this organisation continues not to be very effective at communication pertaining to strategy execution.

7.6 Organisational Architecture

The manner in which organisational architecture is managed in relation to strategy execution is discussed below.

7.6.1 Organisational Structure

Within this case, the organisational structure is considered as a fundamental component when executing strategy. A participant within this case is of the opinion that aligning the organisational structure to effective strategy execution is not effective within this organisation. It is described as follows *“so organisational structure probably impedes some of the execution because everybody is driving around profit and loss and they’re not really interested in anybody else’s profit and loss. So sometimes decisions are made that would impact other business units negatively and we end up trying to decide what’s best for the group” (7:1619-7:1929)*. The participant continues by providing an example of the product management role within the organisation *“But there’s no group product management role that looks at that” (12:1252-12:1317)*.

A different participant concurs by highlighting the reasons for the misalignment of organisational structure to strategy execution by stating that *“well it’s huge you know, so and we’ve got to – you know critical to us here, and this is what I found in this particular organisation, we’re very silo’d along the entity lines because you know through the rapid acquisition of the organisation we’re very functionally, we built functional walls and therefore what we have to do through this process is re-engineer the business in such a*

way that the natural way of working is cross entity/cross-functional” (8:1119-8:1585).

The organisational structure within this organisation is not conducive to effective strategy execution due to the silo mentality and rapid acquisition of companies by this organisation.

7.6.2 Organisational Alignment

Within this organisation, the different business units are responsible for strategy execution. Furthermore, there is no formal strategy execution methodology being followed. Hence, strategy is being executed in silos within this organisation as mentioned, *“You know, we’ve got the silo mentality and all of that” (11:296-11:349).* The participant further states that *“well I think it’s not a secret that there’s very much a silo mentality within the organisation” (12:1380-12:1476).*

The participant is of the opinion that due to the lack of alignment the organisation risks not achieving its strategic objectives as asserted, *“If you know one part of the business doesn’t know what the other part of the business is doing you can’t reasonably expect a strategy to be accomplished where that it encompasses both those departments. So it’s not going to happen” (12:1597-12:1834).*

A different participant describes the lack of organisational alignment as follows *“So what should we be doing in the Financial Services industry, as an example, but there is no real strategy around that. There is lots of tactical initiatives across, three, four or five of the group companies, there is not a group strategy around, okay. Somebody should own this from a group level and understand what we can and could be doing. Then which is the right company in the group to go and execute against that strategy as opposed to everybody is now trying to play in that space, and everybody steps on each other’s toes and I think there’s a lot wasted effort in terms of trying to understand the answer to the question which is, should we be in the Financial Services market?” (12:425-12:1133).*

The evidence at hand indicates that there is a lack of strategy execution alignment within this case. It is because of the silo manner within which this organisation operates as acknowledged by the participants.

7.6.3 Competencies

The executives involved in strategy execution within this case are all highly skilled and possess the appropriate qualifications to enable them to perform their roles to the best of their ability. This is alluded to as follows *“Okay, so I hold a B.Com Degree and a Master of Business Leadership both from UNISA”* (2:215-2:298). Another participant had the following qualifications *“A BSC in Mechanical Industrial Engineering, a Diploma in Marketing. A Diploma in Aviation Law”* (1:927-1:1022). The last participant stated, *“I studied Business Science at Rhodes University majoring in Management and Information Systems”* (2:1050-2:1146).

Two of the executives are of the opinion that their employees have the required skills to perform their jobs optimally. A participant mentioned, *“You know I wouldn’t say we’re near the top, probably slightly above average. As on overall figure”* (5:337-5:435). The participant continues by stating that *“I believe so I think if you look at the competency levels within the organisation I mean it’s there”* (9:431-9:532). A different participant supports this *“Alright, look I think generally we have the right staff for the right skills. We do send people on quite a lot of training”* (8:940-8:1064). The last participant is of the view that the employees do not have the required skills and asserts

Despite having the required skills from a practical perspective, the execution competence is not forthcoming. A participant describes his concerns as follows *“on an individual discipline on specifically Agile, I’d say we’re probably below average”* (5:501-5:589). The participant continues by stating, *“I think it’s just, I think the roles around coordinating those activities and whose responsibilities they are. I think that is where it falls a little flat”* (8:1827-8:1987). A different participant concurs and states that *“So I think we’ve got a long way to go to, we have some skilled people, but I think the adoption of the process defined is not there, the use of it in the business is quite low”* (5:399-

5:579). Another participant supports this by stating that *“No, at the moment I think the answer would be “no.” Second of all, how do you do that? You know you don’t send them on skills training now. I think the project per se can be used very strongly in people developing skills through the actual work that they’re doing. So that’s what we aim to do, so it’s through the execution people will be learning new skills”* (9:1622-9:1992).

Within this case, the employees possess the required skills, technical and work experience to execute the strategy. However, in practice these skills are producing unsatisfactory outcomes. Hence, there is a need to review and improve the current skills set of the employees at all levels.

7.6.4 Project Management Tools

This organisation utilises formal tools during strategy execution. A participant stated, *“So we use specific tools for the incident logging, and we’ve been trying to use Sky format to do project management but we haven’t been able to get those two to work together. So we’re looking for another project management tool which will integrate with the current tools”* (5:1457-5:1727). The participant continues by mentioning that *“So we do use some project management tools, I don’t think we’re very effective at use of project management”* (3:1574-3:1683). In addition to this *“So the biggest challenge is around the integration of the tools across different tool-sets”* (5:1363-5:1455).

A different participant is of the view that *“I think certainly from an Agile perspective definitely tools and techniques we could be using, or better utilising and it is not pointing fingers”* (5:1579-5:1727). This is supported by another participant that asserts that the tools are *“outdated, non-existent to outdated”* (6:432-6:466) due to its ineffectiveness in producing the desired outcomes. The above-mentioned still transpires despite the fact that the tools are reviewed periodically as alluded to *“So we sit down and we look at what we’re busy with and what we need to do, where the businesses are moving to”* (5:978-5:1089). The participant continues by stating that *“No, we try and do it every six months”* (5:1171-5:1208).

Within this case, even though formal tools are utilised during strategy execution they are not very effective in producing the desired outcomes. This is despite the fact that the tools are assessed on a six monthly basis for relevance in conjunction to the business needs.

7.6.5 Culture

This organisation has an entrepreneurial culture and focuses on acquisitions as alluded to *“it has been a very much a growth, it’s a combination of organic growth but growth also through acquisition. So we’ve either taken a one hundred percent stake in organisations, or taken you know like a 51% stake in organisations”* (3:554-3:786). However, one participant is of the opinion that the realignment of the organisational culture with the desired strategy execution outcomes, is an area of concern; *“the problem is the, or not the problem, one of the challenges is around the culture and everybody swimming in the same direction which I think is the bigger challenge, but if everybody was swimming in the same direction I think we would be fine”* (9:534-9:787).

The participant continues by expressing, *“I would say it is around the organisational culture, that can be a threat to successfully executing your strategy”* (11:1287-11:1400). A different participant concurs with the above-mentioned and is of the opinion that the organisation is *“very internally focused and very functionalised, and you know, I’m alright Jack, I’m doing a great job but I’m not sure what the guy next door is doing, but I know I’m fine”* (12:1701-12:1877).

7.7 Conclusion

The table below provides a positive and negative summary of the dimensions discussed pertaining to the role of project management during strategy execution within this case. Table 7-3 below is followed by a detailed description of the findings.

Table 7-3: Case D - Within Case Analysis Summary

Dimension	Positive	Negative
<i>Process Approach</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Defined Project Management discipline utilised. - Centralised project management function and oversight. - Dynamic utilisation of project management. - Project management utilised during strategy execution. - CEO drives strategic direction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loosely defined processes not documented. - Lack of corporate process ownership. - Project management function does not support the entire business. - Lack of Project Management governance. - No formal strategy execution methodology in terms of the Strategy Execution Approach. - No guiding business strategic direction. - Individual departments driving strategy execution. - Lack of strategy execution governance.
<i>Project Selection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formalised prioritisation criteria. - Combined process across the organisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of governance. - Financial based primarily. - Additional criteria not utilised.
<i>Change Management</i>	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of change management interventions. - Lack of effective communication of strategy.

Dimension	Positive	Negative
Organisational Architecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organisational structure realignment awareness. - Formal tools utilised. - Highly skilled employees in terms of capability. - Training provided. - Entrepreneurial culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of proactive organisational structure realignment. - Lack of interdepartmental alignment. - Lack of culture realignment. - Skilled employees not producing the desired outcomes. - Tools utilised are ineffective.

Within this organisation, there is no clearly documented business strategy. In addition to this there is no central unit governing strategy execution. The individual departments are responsible for strategy execution and report directly to the CEO on the progress. Despite this, there is a lack of governance regarding strategy execution. Hence, there is a lack of interdepartmental strategic alignment within this case. Due to the lack of a formal strategy, execution methodology there is a lack of comprehensive strategy execution reporting that included qualitative measures as well. Hence, within this case strategy execution is measured in terms of financial reporting only.

Furthermore, there is a lack of corporate process ownership within this case despite the existence of a formal project management department. The project management department is centralised but only serves certain divisions within this organisation. The project management department applies a number of project management disciplines in a fit for purpose manner depending on the demands of the organisation. However, there is a serious lack of governance regarding the project management function and processes being followed.

This organisation has structured project prioritisation criteria for prioritising projects or initiatives. The organisation gathers on a biannual basis to review the projects. Despite the criteria, comprising of both qualitative and quantitative measures strategy execution is only based on financial indicators. Within this case, the selection of the appropriate projects or initiatives influences strategy execution due to the small profitability margins that this organisation depends upon.

Organisational architecture is regarded as key to ensuring that strategy execution is managed effectively. Within this case, the organisational structure is not aligned to achieving the organisations desired outcomes in terms of strategy execution. Within this case, the employees have the necessary skills and experience to execute the strategy. Conversely, in practice these skills are not producing the needed results. Furthermore, the formal tools utilised by this organisation are not deemed to be very effectively applied and utilised.

Even though change management and communication is regarded as very important within this case. There is a complete lack of focus on these concepts within this organisation. Hence change management and communication is not done well within this case. In addition to this, there is a lack of realigning the organisation culture to the expected strategy execution outcomes, as change management is not a focus within this case.

Project management is utilised during strategy execution within this case. Although the project governance structures and defined processes are in place. The execution of these processes are not very effective due to a lack of sound governance being applied. Hence, the evidence indicates that the utilisation of project management discipline does not effectively aid strategy execution within this case.

Chapter 8 : Cross-Case Analysis and Discussion

Within this chapter, the important findings across the four cases are discussed in detail.

8.1 Introduction

The cross-case findings are analysed and contrasted across the core themes identified from the data collection and interpretation process. The findings are then related to the theoretical concepts and the project management based strategy execution conceptual model discussed in chapter 2, which is the literature review.

An adaptation of the IQA technique was utilised for the cross-case analysis only as discussed in section 3.7.2 of the research methodology chapter. Northcutt and McCoy (2004) state that an IQA study allows the focus group to develop their unique explanations for the concepts under study. Five available members across all the cases were invited to the focus group session. They attended and participated in the study. The focus group utilised the codes developed by the researcher to produce the themes discussed below. Appendix 6 contains a list of all codes. The researcher printed all the codes and randomly placed this on a board. The participants then grouped the codes as they deemed fit. Thereafter they developed the theme names as per the groupings. In utilising IQA the following system influence diagram pertaining to the themes was produced utilising the affinity relationship table.

The description follows the diagram.

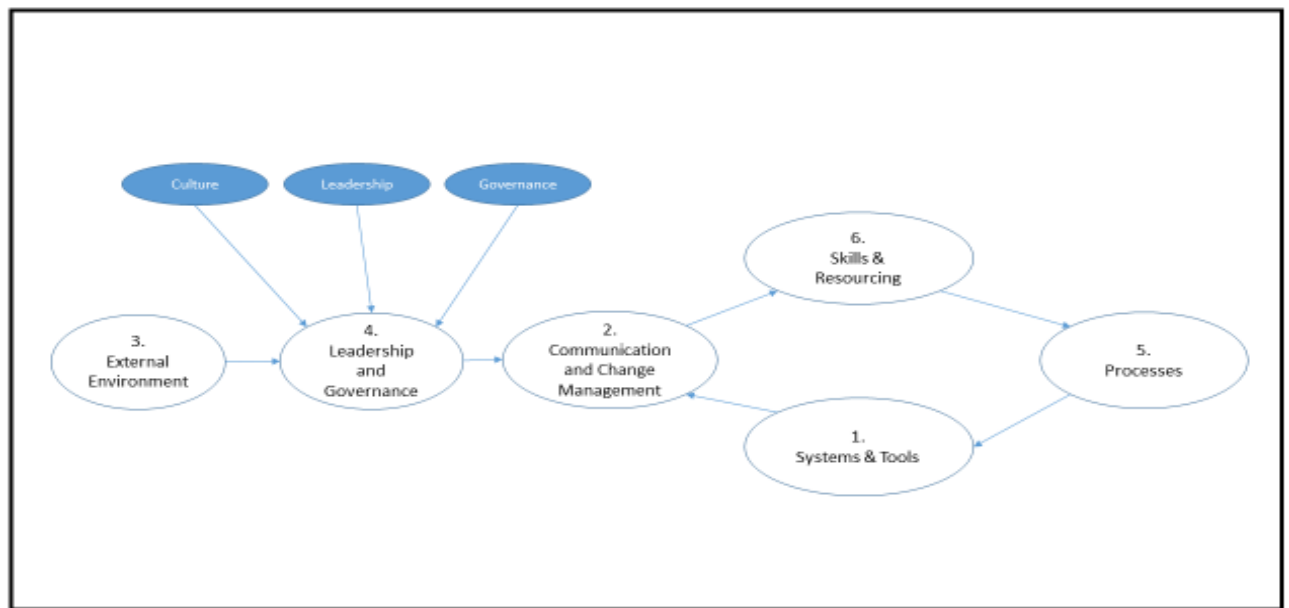


Figure 8-1: System Influence Diagram (SID)

The external environment theme emerged as the primary driver utilising the IQA methodology. This theme influences the leadership and governance theme. The leadership and governance theme was recognised as the secondary driver as per the IQA methodology applied. This theme in turn impacts the communication and change management themes. The communication and change management has an effect on skill and resourcing that in turn influences the process theme. The communication and change management as well as the skills and resourcing were defined as pivots as per the IQA methodology and the process and systems and tools themes were identified as primary outcomes as per the IQA. Furthermore, the process theme influences the systems and tools. This theme then influences communication and change management that results in a feedback loop.

The above-mentioned themes are discussed below and compared across the respective cases. In the introduction of each theme, the codes pertaining to that particular theme is tabularised and a description is provided. The codes and its associated quotations for the cross-case analysis have been developed by combining the codes utilised during the within case analysis.

This allowed the researcher to create fewer more meaningful codes, for discussion and analysis. Appendix 6 illustrates how these codes have been combined.

8.2 External Environment

This theme refers to the part the external environment plays during the role of project management in strategy execution. It comprises of two codes, namely, **competitive threats** and **industry landscape changes**.

Table 8-1: External Environment Codes

Code Name	Description	Number of Quotations
Competitive Threats	The code is defined as the competition the organisation experiences within the commercial environment it operates in.	36
Industry Landscape Changes	This code refers to the issues influencing the industry. It also indicates how the industry is perceived and how the industry is evolving.	45

From an external environment perspective, only Cases B and C raised this theme as being a key element within this study. Cases A and D did not mention this.

8.2.1 Competitive Threats

From a **competitive threat** code, perspective participants within Case B were of the view that the organisation must adapt its processes. This must be in accordance with the changes demanded because of the challenges posed from the alteration in the competitive landscape. A participant emphasised the following *“we’re facing a lot of competition from the small players, but more so the over the top players” (2:1133-2:1221)*. The need to adapt processes is supported accordingly *“so the inability to actually change as the Industry changes, because like we see now. Telco is not just mobile it’s a lot more than mobile and if you look at it in any other sector as well. We are reaching into the financial services sector in terms of money, like mobile money and the*

lines are becoming extremely blurred. And the ability to adapt to that very quickly can either – well if you don't have the ability to adapt to it very quickly it will kill you" (11:1203-11:1692).

Another participant supports the above-mentioned as such. *"There I think is if you are sitting as a R100 billion company, we're talking about the Titanic. So you pick up this glitch here and there, can you turn your strategy that effectively and that fast enough to be able to take care of those? And the answer is, invariably you don't. So systems, processes and the willingness to look and analyse the numbers on a continuous basis to be able to give you those, let's say those nuggets are not in place" (4:1690-4:2147).*

Participants within Case B are of the opinion that there is a need for the organisation to become nimbler in this regard. *"Now invariably the other problem with all these organisations, like I said, and it's not just perennial to us I mean you see it in other bigger companies overseas. The existing IT systems are not flexible and fast enough to give you information soon enough for you to be able to turnaround your strategy" (4:1372-4:1688).* Another participant supports this *"Our second biggest challenge is the fact that we are much slower as an industry to the new competitors that is coming in, and unless we can get more agile....." (23:1477-23:1742).*

Within Case C participants were of the opinion that the **competitive threats** are an opportunity for the organisation to propel themselves beyond their current capability. This is alluded to as follows *"So there is an element of re-inventing and actually taking wide space opportunities that will now open up in the mobile industry. So that I think is playing a big role in the company strategy right now" (3:852-3:1056).* This is further emphasised *"we've launched products that's not seen in the entire global industry launched" (5:603-5:682).*

A different participant supports this by stating that *"It's very I think hard to figure out how the market is going to react. I think if you look at the fibre to the home, the Wi-Fi calling, the Facebook free basics, projects that were*

launched by us is it the right strategy that needs to happen. With some of them there is obviously quite a lot of market education that needs to happen, so they are a longer term view versus just I mean with just normal tariff change things you can get very quick feedback from the market. But when you look at these longer term strategic, you do need to have a longer term view on what you're doing, and that's why you'll see there is consistent advertising and education in the market as well. But it did set up a really good platform for us in order to get to the next level of being a digital telco player" (9:534-9:1394).

Case B viewed the **competitive threats** as a challenge to be addressed by their business. Whereas Case C viewed this as an opportunity to enhance their business and transcend beyond their competition. Both these organisations allude to the fact that whatever challenges are posed to them they need to be equipped to deal with the demands of the industry landscape changes. Hence, processes must be defined and geared for effective strategy execution.

8.2.2 Industry Landscape Changes

From an **industry landscape, change** perspective participants within Case B are aware of the magnitude of this change. A participant asserted as follows: *"...because I think, you know I get quite annoyed when I listen to the radio and especially Investors when they talk about the Industry and they talk about the industry as a telecommunication Industry, and then they talk about the fact that we sort of as a telecommunication industry we're in the mature you know market and we're in the mature phase of our company, and we're sort of in away going to be commoditised" (3:562-3:990).* This is emphasised accordingly *"but I think what people miss is that the telecommunication and the Information Communication and Technology (ICT), because as a telecommunication company we very specifically say that we are not a telco anymore but we're a communication company and we're part of the ICT industry" (3:1059-3:1353).*

A different participant states a factor that influences the **industry landscape** accordingly *“realistically strategy hasn’t changed, if you think about it what changed is the technology which supports the strategy. We started with basic voice, then we went to basic text, then we went to multimedia services, pictures and whatever, and then we went to basic browsing and now we go to full browsing. So it’s a techno push rather than anything else, there’s no pull”* (11:430-11:809). The participant is of the view that in order to remain relevant regarding the above-mentioned the organisation must adapt and states the following *“that essentially is one of the shortcomings of the industry in SA, and it’s one of the things which are going to become more and more important to implement and to put into place to enable, let’s say, continuous profitability for companies”* (3:1351-3:1611).

Participants within Case C are aware of the changing **industry landscape** and are of the view that organisations should remain focused on their core identity. A participant describes this as follows *“one of the biggest challenges that I see in strategy execution is the telco players try to be the be all and end all and want to own every single product.....”* (13:626-13:1028). The participant continues by mentioning that *“....when you look at things in that way you lose the plot, because you need to understand who you are within the eco-system that you play in and what your role is in that. If you look at the companies like Facebook, Google and Apple, there is not identity crisis. In the telco world you can’t execute being a bank, being a media player, being an infrastructure provider and being an insurance company...”* (13:1543-13:1889).

The participant continues by stating that *“so the first thing is to understand what you are a digital telco company from the strategic point of view and then re-structure your resources around that....”* (13:1891-13:2236). Within Case C the industry landscape changes are viewed in a positive manner for this organisation. This is alluded to as follows *“so there is an element of re-inventing and actually taking wide space opportunities that will now open up in the mobile industry. So that I think this is playing a big role in the company strategy right now”* (3:852-3:1056).

8.2.3 Summary

Cases A and D made no mention that neither competitive threats nor industry landscape changes could influence the way in which they execute their strategy. The competitive threats and industry landscape changes stemming from the external environment must be understood within organisations. In addition to this, organisations must determine how to deal with these threats and changes. This will allow them to ensure that mechanisms are place to ensure effective strategy execution. This is consistent with Morgan, *et al.* (2007:181), Franken, *et al.*, (2009:56), Cocks (2010:261) and Alsudiri, Al-Karaghoul and Eldabi (2013:612) who state that companies constantly have to adapt to changes from both the internal and external business environment that impacts the strategy being executed. MacLennan (2011:53) enriches this thought and mentions that aligning company plans and structures are key for successful strategy execution. Table 8-2 below provides a summary of the cross-case analysis.

Table 8-2: Cross-Case Comparison: External Environment

Codes	Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D
Competitive Threats	Not mentioned as either a threat or an opportunity. No comments found about this code.	- Viewed as a threat to the organisation. - No indication that plans are developed to prepare for this.	-Viewed as an opportunity to the organisation. -No indication that plans are developed to prepare for this.	Not mentioned as either a threat or an opportunity. No comments found.
Industry Landscape Changes	Not mentioned as either a threat or an opportunity. No comments made.	- Viewed as a threat to the organisation. - No indication that plans are developed to	-Viewed as an opportunity to the organisation. -No indication that plans are	Not mentioned as either a threat or an opportunity. No

		prepare for this.	developed to prepare for this.	comments made.
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8.3 Leadership and Governance

This theme comprises of three sub themes, namely leadership, governance and organisational culture. These sub themes with the relevant codes and quotations are discussed individually and a cross-case summary containing the analysis of all three sub-themes is presented at the end of this theme. The sections that follow illustrate this.

8.3.1 Leadership

This sub theme comprises of two codes. Leadership support and a lack of strategic direction. The cross-case analysis of these codes are discussed below. Table 8-3 below contains the code and its descriptions.

Table 8-3: Leadership Codes

Code Name	Description	Number of Quotations
Leadership Support	This code asserts that leadership support is key when executing projects regarding strategy execution. It indicates the level of leadership support received within the organisation.	37
Lack of Strategic Direction	This code refers to the issues influencing the strategy execution within the cases.	37

8.3.1.1 Leadership Support

Within Case A, participants are of the opinion that they receive leadership support in terms of mentoring. This is expressed accordingly *“my CIO, when you go to him is, when you talk about open door policy it is a genuine open door policy. You go in he listens to what your scenario is, he helps you unpack it, he doesn’t give you a solution he guides you towards it” (17:1759-18:323).*

The participant continues by declaring that *“.... you have a junior project manager that works closely with the senior project manager, so that you’ve got somebody that can coach you and guide you”* (17:1758-17:1883). This is supported by a different participant who states that *“.... people that are not necessarily project managers yet, that is like in the PMO they’ve been going to internal project management courses or whatever else where I’m actually a mentor for one of the ladies. So they are investing in that I think”* (11:285-11:577).

Furthermore, the organisation supports the employees executing the strategy in the form of training as alluded to *“but I know specifically that the organisation has actually put a huge investment in getting all of the project managers through PMBOK”* (10:1594-10:1718). The participant continues by saying that *“I think the project managers that are here, a lot of them are certified or they’ve actually gone through at least the PMBOK Training”* (9:292-9:425).

Within Case B the leadership support is lacking as asserted by a participant *“.... you know, and also the ability of leadership to take in and understand where people’s concerns are as to, they may have had a blind-spot and somebody is kind of, bring it forward and say, this is an issue. They don’t take that in. So I think there is, what could be improved is the feedback”* (11:525-11:824). The participant continues by stating that *“.... yes, that’s the problem, if people are not empowered to actually make decisions and I think that’s not just leadership that is across the organisation, but leadership’s ability specifically to quickly turn around and make decisions”* (12:218-12:453). In addition to this, there is a lack of training support as described by a different participant *“I was training in the past. I’m sure there is people who are going through process to get the certificates, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera, but it’s not all that visible..... In project management there were initiatives in the past. They are not as visible currently as they were in past”* (8:1762-8:2281).

Case C indicated that they employ highly skilled team members as stated *“....you know the nature of our projects is so diverse, you know, what you*

typically would find is you do engage a Project. Is that you would approach a consultant that would help you with the specialist skills and techniques in that type of project to assist” (3:1430-3:1733). A different participant supports this “.... the projects that we have sponsored has built an enormous amount of experience and skill that we never would have had. So some of the projects that we delivered has delivered learning and experience that you could see as an investment” (6:1149-6:1404). In addition to this, the senior management supports the strategy execution framework as alluded to “.... so we have a strategic process that was signed off and formalised with our shareholders. So there’s a structured strategy process and it talks around regular, I think it is updates” (3:417-3:850).

Within Case D employees are sent on training courses as expressed by a participant *“Alright, look I think generally we have the right staff for the right skills. We do send people on quite a lot of training” (8:940-8:1064). A different participant supports training from a different perspective “you know you don’t send them on skills training now. I think the project per se can be used very strongly in people developing skills through the actual work that they’re doing. So that’s what we aim to do, so it’s through the execution people will be learning new skills” (9:1622-9:1992).*

8.3.1.2 Lack of Strategic Direction

Within Case A, participants are of the opinion that there is a lack of strategic direction within the organisation. This is asserted accordingly, by a participant *“you know I’m not party to any of these sessions that they have with the organisation, if you know what I’m saying. Where they talk strategy and they decide on how they’re going to take it down....” (14:801-14:1054). This is alluded to by a different participant in the following manner “I think if everybody stood back and really looked at it nicely and said, you know, if we do it only this 20 that are aligned with our vision” (18:334-18:534). “Vision and all those things, we probably would have been in a better position than running around like ants in all directions doing a lot of things but achieving nothing” (18:579-18:752). The participant continues by emphasising that*

“...but your biggest problem lies with managers, senior managers and general managers because people always forget, because they’re not so versed in project management” (14:1053-14:1196).

Participants within Case B highlight the lack of strategic direction accordingly *“one of the things that I’m completely sort of interested in is that why are companies so reluctant to communicate their strategy internally to the organisation? Because I think it is extremely important that people like I’ve said to you earlier understand why they are doing things and what is the big picture they’re working towards, because I think then they have a lot of more tolerance for a lot of things that they can’t understand” (26:596-26:1194).* A different participant supports this in the following manner *“.... remember one of the big debates in the organisation is something which essentially has always been happening for whichever reason it is. We don’t know what the strategy is” (14:339-14:516).*

Within Case C participants did not indicate that there is a lack of strategic direction within this organisation.

A lack of strategic direction in Case D is expressed in the following manner *“So I’d say, number one, clear strategy, clear goals clearly defined and having everybody on board and aligned, and then we touched on it earlier but having a sort of performance management. You know having everyone’s goals talking to that strategy which we lack” (10:1567-10:1835).* This is supported as follows by a different participant *“So I think first of all having a strategy and then clearly articulating that strategy and making sure everybody understands and supports that strategy, so that we’re all going in the right direction” (10:213-10:415).* In Case D there is no clearly defined strategy to provide the strategic direction.

8.3.2 Governance

Within this sub theme, four codes were identified. These are project prioritisation, project management governance, strategy execution

governance and organisational architecture alignment to strategy execution. Table 8-4 provides a description of the codes that are discussed below.

Table 8-4: Governance Codes

Code Name	Description	Number of Quotations
Project Prioritisation	This code refers to the project or initiative selection process followed within the respective cases. It indicates the manner in which prioritisation is conducted.	172
Project Management Governance	This code indicates the type of project management governance within the organisation. It alludes to past and current governance structures utilised.	90
Strategy Execution Governance	This code refers to manner in which the strategy execution governance is being applied during strategy execution.	118
Organisational Architecture Alignment	This code describes the manner in which the organisational architecture alignment to strategy execution is managed.	110

8.3.2.1 Project Prioritisation

Within Case A, there is a set criterion that is utilised for project prioritisation. This is expressed as follows: *“so, let’s identify if those projects in the different areas is a board category one project. So that will also give it a higher priority so to speak, you know it will have a bit of more weight. So your project not only has a priority within the unit it also has a classification if it is a board category one or not”* (13:1233-13:1825). Even though a set criterion is in place, there are conflicting priorities within this case. It is stated accordingly *“.....but you do find that there will be a number one priority in each business unit, like Customer Service will have a number one, EBU will have a number one and Marketing will have a number one....”* (13:256-13:448). This is

regarded as an issue as alluded to by a participant “.... okay, so that I think it is a problem at the moment because you still have four or three number ones, and we’re still fighting for the same resources” (13:529-13:749). Due to the ineffectiveness of the current prioritisation process, participants are of the opinion a framing contest develops and becomes the norm to decide what projects are executed. This is asserted accordingly “...outside, who is more important? Which silo is the biggest? Which one screams the loudest?” (16:542-16:632). This is emphasised as follows “...sometimes it is who shouts the loudest, sorry to say, but at least in every business....” (12:1708-13:248).

Within Case A participants are of the view that there is no collective project prioritisation process, due to the silo manner in which the business units operate. This is described accordingly “... right now there is not that discussion to decide on a levelling out. Okay, so that I think is a problem at the moment because you still have four or three number ones, and we’re still fighting for the same resources” (13:529-13:749). This is supported by a different participant “.... so if you look at, I think if you put this gate in place, and maybe it is once a year or it is continuously happening where you do have a few clever guys governing what comes in here that are given and are prioritised to become projects” (25:843-25:1086). Due to this silo prioritisation there is inadequate project prioritisation governance in Case A.

Case B has a formal project prioritisation criteria. This is a collective process driven from a board perspective. This is described accordingly by a participant “so we have very specific targets but we want to accelerate that sooner, and then that becomes – so although there’s identified strategic focus areas they in themselves are prioritised. These things are prioritised on an EXCO level so it is on an executive – on an EXCO which is on a board level” (16:1030-16:1335). This is emphasised as follows “so in the big bets and strategic focuses even if there is sort of like seven to eight projects they might have sort of identified that there is a priority. So that priority will be allocated here....” (16:690-16:1028). Hence, a centralised prioritisation governance process is in place within this case.

Prioritisation within Case B is based on a financial focus. This is alluded to as follows *“Like I said, everything is driven by bottom line. So any project which in theory is going to give you the biggest return, that’s the one which is being pushed”* (10:357-10:825). A different participant concurs by declaring that *“.... we have quite a rigorous approach there in that all medium to large initiatives have to have a business case attached to it. Those business cases then are selected on the basis of, you know, who has the best outcome, whether it’s IRR or NPV’s”* (5:978-5:1230).

Within Case B participants are of the opinion that project selection does not have an impact on strategy execution. This is highlighted as follows *“it may well just be that one’s assumptions that one made in terms of the initial business cases, they may have been incorrect. I don’t think they influence strategy execution, I think execution happens you know whether you’ve chosen the right initiative or not, you know, that remains to be seen”* (6:205-6:628). This is concurred to as follows *“.... so it’s more the strategy that influences the projects”* (8:800-8:854).

In Case C there is a formal criteria utilised to prioritise projects. This is stated as follows *“.... new initiatives have to go through quite a rigorous business plan process, and then investment committee decision making process that goes all the way up to the CEO before execution could happen....”* (8:2083-8:2291). This is emphasised accordingly *“there’s a lot of review of current projects, a lot of review of past projects and using all of that stuff to come up with a – based on analysis and approach that you want to adopt, once that approach has been agreed and bought into....”* (5:1537-5:1963). Based on the above-mentioned a sound project prioritisation governance process is used in this case.

Financial indicators are used for project prioritisation within this case as revealed by a participant *“.... most projects are selected on return on investments which would be different for different areas. So a return on investment for a product would be probably not always revenue, it could be a market disrupting element or a promotional thing, but yes, all of them do get*

evaluated on its return on investment, is it you know, resources or money” (8:1240-8:1643). Another participant concurs as follows “so from a project point of view they do track and prioritise projects on gross margin contribution and bottom line profit....” (8:1645-8:1965).

Within this case, the CEO plays a pivotal role in driving prioritisation. This is asserted as follows “.... new product introductions are always fairly high up on the priority list and then obviously the CEO specific projects that had to be executed...” (8:844-8:1161). A different participant concurs by saying that “.... we’ve got a very strongly character CEO, he makes a number of statements, and on the back of those statements we implement some projects to implement what we think is the strategy” (4:441-4:730). Within this case, selecting the appropriate projects does not appear to have an influence on strategy execution. This can be attributed to the project prioritisation process applied and the drive from the CEO in ensuring that key projects are implemented.

Case D utilises a formalised criteria to manage project prioritisation. This is discussed in a formal bi-annual meeting as described by a participant “.... technique perspective I guess we try and get together every sort of six months and look at what’s happening in the various areas of the business. So it’s more around paper exercise. So it’s more of a consultative brown paper exercise and that ends up into prioritisation” (3:1685-3:1976). Within the case, the prioritisation consists of four key areas, namely, revenue generation, cost reduction, risk avoidance and user experience. The criteria is dominated from a financial indicator perspective. However, the prioritisation process governance is lacking as alluded to above.

Selecting the right type of projects is important within this company as asserted “.... no, no, no I think you know, you’ve got to select the right, you’ve got to, you know look, you’ve got to select, make sure that you know through the diagnostic phase you do select the right focus areas” (9:653-9:861). Another participant agrees upon this, “... I don’t think we necessarily always understand what the return on investment is going to be. So that’s probably

the biggest threat is that we make a big investment and it doesn't provide the return" (10:951-10:1302).

Within Cases A, B and C there is a formal project selection criteria. Within Case D the selection process serves as the prioritisation process as well. This is aligned to Kaplan and Norton (2008) who highlight the importance of creating a framework for the choosing, financing and the assigning of responsibility to the portfolio of strategic initiatives. They are of the opinion that these activities integrate short-term deliverables with inter-departmental and strategic priorities thereby creating the required urgency for the execution of the strategic initiatives.

Cases B, C and D have a combined EXCO project or initiative prioritisation process. This is good practice according to Morgan, *et al.*, (2007:157) who express that the selection process for project prioritisation should be focused on each projects impact to the value adding events of the organisation. Hereafter the availability of resources are determined through careful analysis of the current resources and their workloads (Morgan, *et al.*, 2007:164 and Franken, *et al.*, 2009:54). Within Case A there is no consolidated project prioritisation process across the organisation as recommended above.

In addition to regulatory projects being implemented. Despite the criteria in place within Cases B, C, and D the prioritisation of projects is primarily selected on financial feasibility. This is supported by Franken, *et al.*, (2009:55) who state that return on investments and the accountability for this be determined. Thompson, *et al.*, (2007:361) and Franken, *et al.*, (2009:55) support the above-mentioned by asserting that a viable business case is key to selecting and financing of projects as well as availing resources for effective strategy execution.

Within Case A, there is a framing contest that develops to determine prioritisation. Kaplan, S, (2008:729) defines framing contests as the manner in which people convert their individual intellectual understanding of a position into the preferred approach through a sequence of exchanges. Managers

transform unclear information into meaningful data. Staff that conducted themselves skilfully during these exchanges influenced the approach the organisation pursues. Hence, the method in which projects are selected does influence strategy execution within Case A. This is because the best interest of the organisation is not necessarily considered but the person who present the best argument.

Across Cases A and D there is a lack of project selection governance. Within Case D a lack of governance still occurs with formal project prioritisation criteria in place and combined meetings within the organisation. A lack of governance is contrary to Cocks (2010:264) who believe that for strategy execution to be successful sound end-to-end systems are important. These include standard operating procedures, governance, recruitment and selection as well as incentives. This is supported by Morgan, *et al.*, (2007: 182) and Franken *et al.*, (2009:54) who are of the view that organisations can remain in tune with robust governance structures that will allow them to stay in touch with the performance of their initiatives. Therefore, the selection of projects within Cases A and D influences strategy execution due to a lack of control during selection.

Cases B and C evidenced sound project selection governance that encompasses formal sessions within the organisation. This is aligned to Cocks (2010), Morgan, *et al.*, (2007) and Franken, *et al.*, (2009) who emphasise that end-to-end governance is important for strategy execution as mentioned above. With the sound project selection governance within Case B. If, the incorrect assumptions are decided upon during the feasibility phase. This will not lead to the incorrect projects being decided upon within the organisation. Within Case B the project, selection does not influence strategy execution and ultimately the achievement of the overall strategic objectives.

Within Case C the selection of the strategic projects or initiatives does not influence strategy execution due to the sound governance applied to the project or initiative selection approach. Sound implementation governance supports this. Within Case B and C, the selection of projects or initiatives is

based on their value to the organisation as asserted by (Morgan, *et al.*, 2007:157). Hence the lack of influence on strategy execution by the project or initiative selection approach

8.3.2.2 Project Management Governance

In Case A, the centralised project management governance is managing a decentralised project management function. This is stated as follows “Yes, we do have PMO....” (6:1483-6:1502). This is backed up accordingly “.... so I can say we do have one” (12:667-12:697). However, participants are concerned about the state of project management governance. They are of the opinion that project management governance is lacking. This is alluded to accordingly “.... in the bank you had a long time to plan the strategies, and here you need to move it quick. The guys were used to just implementing it, but if you look at the defects that came out because they didn’t follow project management methodology” (9:922-9:1190). A different participant concurs by stating that “.... I mean you get to a project, you want to implement the project and there is something that you’ve agreed but it has never been documented in the scoping document, and now the project is stuck because there is no proof. You have no way of knowing in which direction to go now” (16:630-16:922).

Case B has a formal centralised PMO function that governs the decentralised project management function. This is described as follows “.... there is a central PMO which provides governance to various areas. Where project managers don’t report into that governance structure we do ensure that at some point that they have covered their basis. So it’s dependent in the business unit that they’re employed....” (7:537-7:937). Another participant concurs with the above-mentioned accordingly “.... depending on what’s required they do have people that drive those. So now we’ve called them business managers which will coordinate and do that project management activity across the business units” (4:250-4:457). In this case, there is a lack of project management governance as alluded to “.... so within the end-to-end process very little in terms of the rigid project management discipline....” (3:763-3:1153). Another participant concurs by saying that “.... this one aligns

to what I said before, we use project management elements but not the end-to-end process....” (3:1292-3:1571).

Within Case C the project, management governance is centralised and it governs a decentralised project management function. This is stated as follows “.... *project management, yes, but I think probably not through a central project office. It’s more decentralised into the individual divisions to actually run their own projects to make things happen*” (3:622-3:894). The centralised governance is described accordingly “.... *we do have a centralised programme management office within Finance and Strategy which works, it bridges the gap between all divisions*” (4:777-4:913). This is supported accordingly by a different participant “.... *they have monthly review meetings with the cross functional teams and the entire organisation. We also have an Ops forum running through the projects*” (4:1439-4:1581). In this case project management governance is regarded as being sound as alluded to “.... *there’s a structured strategy process and it talks around regular, I think it is updates*” (3:417-3:850).

Case D also has a centralised project management governance function. This is described accordingly “.... *so you can’t rely on individual business units necessarily, owning and driving what they need to do, you still need some sort of a central unit that’s coordinating and pulling activities together*” (13:563-13:763). This is supported accordingly “.... *then there’s a monthly meeting with all the business units together where we explain what we’re doing in each business unit and try and address any conflicts across projects*” (6:922-6:1287). Project management governance is of concern to the participants as alluded to “.... *the handover from Programme Office/IT back into the business is we can do a lot better, again... I think it is on both sides of the fence where that process can be managed a lot better. So they operationalised poorly*” (8:1343-8:1653).

8.3.2.3 Strategy Execution Governance

In Case A, the strategic direction is provided from a parent company perspective. This is described as follows “.... if you look at it is you’ve got your board doing their high levels, and then it gets pushed onto your execs, your EO’s and then they sit with their GM’s....” (19:347-19:768). Within this case, they have developed their own strategy execution framework as stated “.... I’ve just heard it, is the new “Go to Market (GTM)” process that they’re going to follow. So I think that GTM process will cover sort of what the business is currently lacking and it will just harness what they want to do I think” (8:843-8:1306).

Within Case A, strategy execution governance is lacking and is an area of concern for the participants. This is described accordingly “.... I don’t know about it, my apologies to the company but really I don’t think there is” (23:288-23:391). The participant continues by revealing, “It’s not very good at this stage. I remember in the olden days, not that I’m – you know I’ve only been here since 2013, and we had the Business Cases and BO (Business Optimisation) did try to do some type of measurement or return on an investment after things were implemented” (21:205-21:480). Hence, individual departments are governing their own strategy execution within this case. Due to the lack of a centralised governance function. Within this case, participants did not allude the relevance of strategy execution reporting in terms of the governance being applied.

Case B has no formal strategy execution methodology but follow an informal framework that has developed within this organisation. In Case B the strategic direction is driven from a main shareholder perspective. Further to this, individual business units are responsible for strategy execution. This is described accordingly “.... each business unit would have a specific sort of unit that would drive that.... there is an overarching what we call an Enterprise Project Management team but they really get involved when it moves from a strategic position into sort of more operational where the strategy becomes”

(5:204-5:564). A different participant supports this “.... each business unit in which strategy is executed is responsible for it....” (7:756-7:880).

In this case, financial targets are utilised to monitor progress during strategy execution. This process is formalised as stated “so it is a three year and a one year plan and that in itself gets approved in January. Then in January what happens is the business units would then say, okay, given that these were the strategic objectives we had and the thrusts which we’ve discussed with the board and the shareholders, this was the approval and this is the budgets that link to it.

The financial monitoring is described accordingly “the budget then gets into a cycle where it gets approved by shareholders and then with that budget we would say, okay, given that these were our strategic thrusts, this was the resources that we get into it and now it gets executed into the organisation on a business level” (4:1863-4:2604). “.... finance would actually report on these things on a monthly basis from a financial point of view and again because they’re linked to targets. So there would be a very specific target that we’d have to reach like three percent of service revenue must come from enterprise projects” (7:1097-7:1395). This is supported as follows “.... it’s purely driven from an accounting perspective. The reason is simple, to be blunt you know, the main shareholder is not interested in anything else they’re interested how much do they make” (8:845-8:1036).

However, there is a lack of strategy execution governance. This is because a holistic view of strategy execution governance is not considered. This is mentioned accordingly “.... there is no standard, but what we are moving towards is increased precision on execution management and largely moving it towards project management space” (2:1226-2:1386). This is concurred by a different participant “.... It’s becoming more and more critical and it’s becoming more and more accepted that people and the CEO and whatever are starting to realise that it’s not about defining the strategy, it’s about execution” (6:316-6:716).

Within Case C there is a sound strategy execution function in place. This despite the fact that the individual departments being responsible for driving strategy execution. This is stated as follows “.... *we have a strategic process that was signed off and formalised with our shareholders. So there’s a structured strategy process and it talks around regular, I think it is updates. It is actually quite interesting and our business is going into a new future right now*” (3:417-3:850). The sound governance is supported accordingly “.... *that business plan again is filtered down into the business to execute on the strategy, but the strategy is linked to the business plan* (3:222-3:364).

Case C has a collective strategy execution governance as described by participants “.... *there is a big cross-functional meeting with the impacts on customer care, and the impact on marketing, and then came from everything else that was discussed* (14:927-14:1786). This is supported as follows “.... *we have monthly review meetings with the cross-functional and the entire organisation. We have an operational forum running through the projects*” (4:1439-4:1581). This collective framework has contributed to the sound strategy execution governance within this case.

In addition to the above, a formal strategy execution reporting exists within this case as stated “.... *setup an overall framework which we followed from a governance perspective, and then it was more on the normal timing and budget measurements that we used....*” (7:728-7:1028). Yet, there is an emphasis on financial strategy execution reporting as alluded to by the participants “.... *I think it’s mainly through financial analysis where your projects are assessed and implementation are assessed. It is mostly over a longer term period it’s not short-term*” (4:1676-4:1872). A different participant concurs “*the financial limits, that we’re very focused on like any good business, but I think it’s the non-financial aspects of that we could be better at*” (8:1114-8:1261).

There is a concern regarding focussing on financial strategy execution reporting as stated “*return on investment I think is always a tricky one, and I think this an area where you know any company can have improvement,*

because it is very, very difficult often to reconcile the true return on investment” (7:322-7:845). This is supported as follows “.... *because the accounting is done on a much more rolled up level, you know, it’s hard to say on specific performance of initiatives. So that is the one part where I think certain additional maturity should be looked at and catered for*” (11:503-11:1048). Financial strategy execution reporting is a major component of strategy execution governance but requires improvement within this case.

Case D has does not utilise a formal strategy execution methodology. This is highlighted as follows “.... *so from a group perspective there is no real methodology*” (3:301-3:357). In addition to this, there is no clear business strategy as alluded to “.... *I think the biggest problem is that when you do not have clear strategic thrust or strategy. Everything else wobbles from there. So it’s like having no foundation, and because the strategic thrusts or the focus is not clear everything off that you know doesn’t operate because people I find are operating at a very transactional level*” (6:1353-6:1705). The above-mentioned contributes to a lack of strategy execution governance. This is concurred accordingly “.... *currently within our environment, not, but I think going forward will be by some form of a steer co that oversees the execution*” (10:219-10:348).

Furthermore, financial indicators are used for strategy execution reporting in Case D. This is asserted as follows “*so it is, it’s a numbers game, it’s around, here’s a business we think we like the people who run it. We think they can add to our bottom line. We think they will create a new channel to market, so let’s go and buy them*” (11:1714-11:1964). A different participant complements the above by stating, “*The budget effectively is the strategy*” (10:425-10:463). This is supported accordingly “*so I think if you’ve got a strategy you’ve got to be able to measure it, you know, measure your execution against that strategy. Here the strategy is “grow” by 20% a year*” (11:1040-11:1218). With individual business units responsible for strategy execution as mentioned, “*Every business unit head is responsible for the execution*” (8:1297-8:1475) and a lack of guidance contributes to the strategy execution lack of governance.

8.3.2.4 Organisational Architecture Alignment

Within Case A there is a lack of organisational structure alignment to strategy execution. This is due to the brain drain caused by the restructure within the organisation. This has resulted in key personnel leaving the organisation as alluded to by participants *“what did happen after the restructure, we created little pockets of project management disciplines, it started all over the organisation and now we want to pull it together into one again”* (12:1077-12:1270). This resulted in the various enablement units not following a standard hence inconsistent governance processes were applied. The lack organisational structure realignment to strategy execution due to insufficient resources caused by the restructure as alluded to above is further emphasised *“.... that is where the biggest problem is, when the guys says, but you keep on using my operational guys to do your projects. That is the biggest thing that you get, the people don’t have sufficient operational people to implement projects correctly”* (22:516-22:781).

Within Case A, the lack of organisational structure realignment to strategy execution has caused a silo mentality. Key enablement teams required to work together to execute on the strategy have been separated. This is asserted accordingly *“.... if you think about it, what you really want in project management, you want the three things together that must sit together, is your business analyst, your solution architect and your project manager”* (13:628-13:840). The lack of realignment is supported *“.... you can’t have those three separately. That is your trilogy that you require because one is going to analyse the business case and write it for you. Then you’ve got your solution architect that is going to implement the solution, and you’re sitting with them from the beginning”* (13:842-13:1140).

In Case A there is an awareness that the organisational structure must be realigned to enable effective strategy execution. However, there are no proactive plans currently in place to address this.

Participants within Case B are cognisant of the fact that the organisational architecture must be realigned to strategy execution. This is expressed accordingly *“.... and again let me question my thinking because you always sort of said, does strategy follow the structure?” (18:457-18:587). “Or does structure follow the strategy? In our life structure follows strategy” (18:629-18:706).* This is agreed upon as follows *“the initial strategy was that fibre was going to be a driver for enterprise, or it would have been driven by enterprise, and then consumer. Then that changed it went back to consumer as opposed to enterprise. So that team of people kept on moving around. Now it’s sitting within consumer because there realisation was that it’s a long-term business, when you’re deployed to capture an enterprise you’re going to be passing consumers” (12:268-12:719).*

Even though there is an awareness of organisational structure realignment to strategy execution. This is not applied consistently as alluded to *“.... there is very few OD initiatives that I’m aware of. The organisation had a major change in the past when split Consumer from Enterprise. That was about six years ago, but essentially there hasn’t been any new major initiatives within the organisation from a structure perspective” (11:2092-11:2472).*

Furthermore, interdepartmental alignment to ensure effective organisational strategy execution is another area of concern within Case B. This assertion is described as follows *“.... that’s probably one of the biggest challenges for large scale strategy execution because, you know, traditionally large organisations and established organisations operate in silos. So when one has a strategy that cuts across multiple silos it is quite difficult to get you know proper harmony across the group” (6:794-6:1120).* A different participant concurs *“.... it is the integration between other business units where I think we struggle a bit” (9:383-9:467).*

The need for alignment within this case is further emphasised *“.... so alignment is one. I think the other one that is very important in terms of the execution of the strategy is the buy-in of the different business units of taking ownership and things like that, because a lot of times they can say that is it*

strategies problem. It comes again for me to alignment, because the people understand” (23:217-23:696). In Case B the organisational structure and interdepartmental alignment to strategy execution is an area of concern that must be addressed.

Within Case C the alignment of the organisational structure to strategy execution is regarded as important to strategy execution. This is described accordingly *“I think our business is very structured in terms of the key operating departments and that’s how our networks work. So your Network team is, so it does play a big role and for the right reasons. Because to drive a project or a strategy can have massive network ramifications. So you find that the organisational architecture plays a huge role” (10:1242-10:1653).* A different participant concurs by saying that *“.... unless you can, especially align your architecture to strategy you’re not going to have an optimised platform that enables business, So, if your architecture is not aligned to strategy it’s just costing you more in the end” (9:1537-9:1947).*

Within Case C there is interdepartmental alignment as stated *“We have three I would say project offices and then they all work together” (7:1517-7:1881).* However, participants are of the opinion that there is a need for improved proactive alignment of organisational architecture to strategy execution. This is alluded to in the following manner *“we now need to start making its ability to ensure the business is a lot more available. Now organisationally what that is going to probably require is, the functions outside of the strategy function, will now need to start making resources available and that doesn’t necessarily need to be full time resources, but almost like a matrix organisation, where people can be available part time for specific projects and programmes” (13:980-13:1414).*

Another challenge pertaining to strategy execution effectiveness is highlighted “.... one of the biggest challenges that I see in strategy execution is the telco players try to be the be all and end all and want to own every single product. I think partly the Country Club of the telco players is partly to blame because everything gets given an M word. You know, so now it was Mobile Money,

then it is Mobile Agriculture then it's Mobile Health" (13:626-13:1028). This creates further intricacy for aligning the organisational architecture to strategy execution.

Within Case D the alignment of organisational architecture to strategy execution is regarded as crucial. However, it is an area of concern within this case as stated by a participant *".... so organisational structure probably impedes some of the execution because everybody is driving around profit and loss, They're not really interested in anybody else's profit and loss. So sometimes decisions are made that would impact other business units negatively and we end up trying to decide what's best for the group" (7:1619-7:1929).*

The lack of organisational architecture alignment to strategy execution is further emphasised by departments not working together *"well it's huge you know, so and we've got to, you know critical to us here, and this is what I found in this particular organisation, we're very silo along the entity lines. Because you know through the rapid acquisition of the organisation, we're very functional. We built functional walls and therefore what we have to do through this process is re-engineer the business in such a way that the natural way of working is cross entity/cross-functional" (8:1119-8:1585).* Within Case D the alignment of the organisational architecture to strategy execution is an area that must be addressed.

Across the Cases A, B, C and D there is awareness that the organisational architecture must be realigned to ensure the achievement of strategic goals. This is not aligned to Louw and Venter (2010:480) who are of the view that the entire company must agree and not only be aware of the organisational architecture in order to achieve the strategic objectives. They are of the view if there are no consensus the company will not harness the desired support to the detriment of effective strategy execution. It is supported by Simerson (2011:243) who state that for envisaged changes to be effective, organisations must change their organisational architecture and thinking in favour of these changes.

However, within all the Cases A, B, C and D there is a lack of proactive organisational structure realignment. This is inconsistent with Louw and Venter (2010:478) who assert that organisational structure enables a sense of guidance and commitment for an organisation. It guides the organisation to achieve its objectives through assigning responsibility and accountability. The lack of proactive organisational structure realignment is also inconsistent with Thompson, *et al.*, (2007:377) who express that events which are of strategic importance should be the key components for structuring an organisation. This will ensure these events receive the desired attention to ensure the successful strategy execution.

Within Cases A, B and D there is a lack of inter-departmental alignment when executing strategy. This is misaligned to Kaplan and Norton (2008:12), Khadem (2008:29), Cocks (2010:264) and MacLennan (2011:53) who are in agreement that for strategy execution to be successful there must be alignment of resources and activities throughout the entire organisation. Kaplan and Norton (2008:12) and MacLennan (2011:54) agree and mention that unless the various departments within the business as well as employees understand the strategy and the role they play in achieving the strategy. It will be extremely challenging for the business to execute their strategy successfully. Only Case C illustrates the inter-departmental alignment.

8.3.3 Organisational Culture

This sub theme refers to the impact of organisational culture when assessing the role of project management during strategy execution. it comprises of one code named culture. This is described in Table 8-5 and discussed below.

Table 8-5: Organisational Culture Codes

Code Name	Description	Number of Quotations
Culture	This code alludes to the manner in which this organisation approaches the way they conduct	98

	business. It encompasses both the commercial way of work as well as the manner in which the organisation functions operationally.	
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8.3.3.1 Culture

The organisational culture within Case A is based on good relationships within this organisation. Should personnel fail to achieve this strategy execution effectiveness becomes an issue. This is asserted in the following manner *“So that’s part of your thing, but that also helps with relationship building, because now you’re building a relationship with specifically again your SMs, GMs and Execs” (14:855-14:1027)*. This is supported accordingly *“If you don’t have that, it is one failure causes a snowball effect down the line, and then you start getting the blame salute where everybody stands like this [participant points a finger in the researcher’s direction indicating what the blame salute is]” (16:1506-16:1669)*.

In this case, the good relationship culture is encouraged by the leadership. This is stated accordingly *“.... my CEO is, when you go to him is, when you talk about open door policy it is a genuine open door policy” (17:1759-17:1883)*. The participant continues *“.... you go in he listens to what your scenario is, he helps you unpack it, he doesn’t give you a solution he guides you towards it” (18:195-18:323)*.

There is a lack of culture realignment to strategy execution within Case A as alluded to *“.... I just think with regards to us, we went to a mature organisation to having nothing in three year’s time” (12:946-12:1060)*. The following statement supports this accordingly: *“we do, I mean we were mature in it, we went from mature to very immature” (4:480-4:557)*.

Case B has developed a culture of complacency over the years. This is alluded to in the following manner *“success of your current business, so you get comfortable with you’re used to doing and you’re quite happy to carry on with that” (8:992-8:1121)*. Another participant concurs, *“They are going to look*

at the bottom line and they go like, we're doing fine, so be it" (12:720-12:815). The lack of culture realignment is further highlighted *"so and like I said in the beginning. Strategy definition should be happening from the people who are going to execute the strategy, because then essentially remember they are the experts, and then if they define it they own it" (14:910-14:1144).* Therefore, there is a need for this aspect to be addressed for strategy execution effectiveness.

A culture of innovation exists within Case C. This is described as follows *"it's actually challenging the status quo and the paradigm of project management, which has brought the scene into a new project mode and understanding and skill-set" (6:1709-6:1945).* This is supported accordingly *"most businesses are set up similar. I think it's mainly, it's not necessarily the structure of the business that influences, more the culture of the business and the culture of co-operation" (7:538-7:766).* In this case, they are aware of the need to realign the organisational culture to the demands of effective strategy execution.

However, there is a need to improve the alignment of culture to enable effective strategy execution. This is expressed accordingly, *"so cultural change needs to be re-aligned strategically where the company is going" (16:235-16:1566).* This is supported as such *"the challenge is that you could be split internally by people who will believe in the old way, and people who are seeing the new way if you don't have everyone in your business truly buying in" (15:263-15:829).*

Case D has an entrepreneurial culture that demands that initiatives happen at a rapid pace. However, the aligning of the culture to strategy execution is an issue within this case. This is stated as follows *"the problem is the or not the problem, one of the challenges is around the culture and everybody swimming in the same direction which I think is the bigger challenge, but if everybody was swimming in the same direction I think we would be fine" (9:534-9:787).* The lack of culture alignment is supported *"I would say it is around the organisational culture that can be a threat to successfully executing your strategy" (11:1287-11:1400).*

Across all the cases, the participants confirmed that there is a total lack of culture realignment in terms of achieving the revised organisational strategic objectives. This differs from Bartol and Martin (1998) who assert that an ingrained culture plays a vital role in strategy alignment as well as strategy execution. According to Morgan, *et al.*, (2007:97) organisations should consider strategies being developed relative to their distinctive organisational culture. Reason being that it is very complex to alter an organisational culture and the risk of unsuccessful strategy execution is greater if there is misalignment.

8.3.4 Summary

Across Cases A, B and D there is a lack of leadership support and a lack of strategic direction provided during strategy execution. Project prioritisation governance is lacking within Cases A and D. In addition, there is a lack of project management and strategy execution governance across Cases A, B and D. Only Case C displayed organisational structure realignment to strategy execution. The respective cases have different types of cultures that influences strategy execution accordingly. Case A has a relationship-based culture driven by the leadership team to get the work done. Hence, with the loss of intellectual property, very few projects materialised due to employees leaving and there being very few relationships. Within Case B, a complacency culture has festered. Hence, there is never a need to improve execution competence due to complacency. Case C has an innovative culture yet they are more organised in terms of strategy execution. Within Case D, the entrepreneurial culture has resulted in a lack of execution competence due to not following processes. Table 8-6 below details the differences and similarities within this theme.

Table 8-6: Leadership and Governance Summary

Code	Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D
Leadership				
Leadership Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mentoring and Training - Lack of leadership during strategy execution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of support and training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Active involvement of leadership. - Very skilled staff employed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training provided. - Lack of support during strategy execution.
Lack of Strategic Direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of direction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of direction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic direction provided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of direction. - No defined strategy.
Governance				
Project Prioritisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formal criteria - No consolidated prioritisation. - Framing contest - Inadequate prioritisation governance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formal criteria - Centralised EXCO prioritisation. - Sound governance - Based on financial criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formal criteria - Centralised EXCO prioritisation. - Sound governance - Based on financial criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formal criteria - Centralised EXCO prioritisation. - Inadequate prioritisation governance. - Based on financial criteria.
Project Management Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decentralised project management function. - Centralised project management governance. - Lack of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decentralised project management function. - Centralised project management governance. - Lack of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decentralised project management function. - Centralised project management governance. - Sound 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Centralised project management function. - Centralised project management governance. - Lack of project

	project management governance.	project management governance.	governance.	management governance.
Strategy Execution Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group strategic direction. - In house <i>strategy execution</i> methodology followed. - No centralised unit managing <i>strategy execution</i>. - Individual departments managing <i>strategy execution</i>. - Lack of <i>strategy execution</i> governance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group strategic direction. - Structured <i>strategy execution</i> methodology. - Individual departments managing <i>strategy execution</i>. - Lack of <i>strategy execution</i> governance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CEO driven strategic direction. - Informal <i>strategy execution</i> methodology followed. - Individual departments managing <i>strategy execution</i>. - Sound <i>strategy execution</i> governance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CEO driven strategic direction. - Informal <i>strategy execution</i> methodology followed. - No clear business strategy. - Individual departments managing <i>strategy execution</i>. - Lack of <i>strategy execution</i> governance.
Organisational Architecture Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness of <i>organisational architecture</i> alignment to strategy execution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness of <i>organisational architecture</i> alignment to strategy execution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness of <i>organisational architecture</i> alignment to strategy execution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness of <i>organisational architecture</i> alignment to strategy execution.

	- Lack of organisational structure realignment. - Lack of inter-departmental alignment.	- Lack of organisational structure realignment. - Lack of inter-departmental alignment.	- Lack of proactive organisational structure realignment. - Interdepartmental alignment in place.	- Lack of organisational structure realignment. - Lack of inter-departmental alignment.
Organisational Culture				
Culture	- Lack of culture realignment to strategy execution. - Relationship based culture.	- Lack of culture realignment to strategy execution. - Complacency culture.	- Lack of culture realignment to strategy execution. - Innovative culture.	- Lack of culture realignment to strategy execution. - Entrepreneurial culture.

8.4 Communication and Change Management

This theme refers to the manner in which communication and change management is utilised during the concepts under study. Four codes were identified for this theme. From a communication perspective, two codes were identified. Namely, structured communication and a lack of communication regarding strategy execution. Formal change management interventions and a lack of change management were the two codes that emerged from a change management perspective. Due to the relationship between codes within this theme. The codes for both communication and change management are discussed collectively for ease of reference. Table 8-7 provides a description of the codes.

Table 8-7: Communication and Change Management Codes

Code Name	Description	Number of Quotations
Structured Communication	This code states the level of communication regarding the entire strategic management process within the organisation. It indicates how communication is managed regarding the concepts under study.	21
Lack of Communication	This code identifies the lack of communication regarding the entire strategic management process within the organisation.	65
Formal Change Management Interventions	This code asserts that defined change management processes are in place when operationalising projects once complete. Furthermore, it refers to the manner in which other key organisational changes are managed within the organisation.	44
Lack of Change Management	This code indicates that there is a lack of change management processes in place within these organisations.	23

8.4.1 Structured Communication and Lack of Communication

Within Case A, participants did not indicate that **structured communication** was in place. Within this case, participants are of the opinion that there is a **lack of communication** because of the silo mentality within the organisation: *“No, I think it is very important and I think that the structure seems to be working at the moment. I just feel that it’s not communicated, the structure itself is not communicated”* (9:1037-9:1221). A further **lack of communication** is highlighted as follows by a participant responsible for executing key projects *“...you know I’m not party to any of these sessions that they have with the organisation, if you know what I’m saying. Where they talk strategy and they decide on how they’re going to take it down. So I don’t think I’m really qualified to actually answer that”* (14:801-14:1054).

Within this case, the manner of stakeholder relationships has an impact on communication effectiveness. Good relationships emerged as an enabler for effective communication. This is expressed accordingly *“it is a symbiotic relationship”* (16:1401-16:1434). The participant continues by stating that *“if you don’t have that it is – one failure causes a snowball effect down the line, and then you start getting the blame salute where everybody stands like this...[participant pointing a finger at the researcher]”* (16:1505-16:1669). This only emerged within Case A and not within Cases B, C and D.

Within Case B, participants assert that communication of the strategy is very important. A **structured communication** framework is utilised within this case. Participants believe that this is integral to obtain buy in from all employees executing the strategy. This is asserted as follows *“now I know for a fact that every year there’s a road show and there’s a two day/single day workshop with the CEO and his EXCO where essentially it’s this speed dating concept. You go from area to area and people tell you, this is the strategy for next year, and it’s been this and that, and we’ll tell you”* (14:518-14:834). However, the participants assert that due to the rapid growth of the organisation certain aspects to ensure effective strategy execution were neglected.

Participants within Case B are of the view that the strategy is not communicated enterprise wide as declared *“one of the things that I’m completely sort of interested in is that why are companies so reluctant to communicate their strategy internally to the organisation? Because I think it is extremely important that people like I’ve said to you earlier understand why they are doing things and what is the big picture they’re working towards, because I think then they have a lot of more tolerance for a lot of things that they can’t understand”* (26:596-26:1194). This concern is further supported *“when you ask this question to any executive team member they would say to you, but you can’t communicate the strategy too wide because it is you know strategic”* (26:1220-26:1422).

Within Case C, the participants acknowledged that communication is taking place but differed regarding the impact of communication on the strategy execution process. There is no **structured communication** process in place. This is expressed accordingly “...we have a fairly unstructured communication process around that people kind of hear what the CEO said, and so they’ll be very cognisant of that to their day to work and they’ll get busy and do what is filtered down” (15:736-15:1054). A different participant supports the above-mentioned as follows “I don’t think there is enough done with it, you know, the way that it gets communicated needs to be reviewed” (16:2237-16:2347). Another participant highlights the lack of communication as follows “...so I think if people, obviously information is knowledge, if people know more they will engage more and I think that’s probably trying to change the process as well to that. So if they know more, like I say, for me that’s the root cause, we’re trying to address the root cause of the corporation to increase or to improve, if you want to call it that” (7:1370-7:1784).

In Case D participants agreed that communication is not performed very well within the organisation. This is expressed accordingly “so communication is key and I think it’s been one of our problems and challenges in the past” (11:351-11:445). A different participant supports this issue by mentioning that “...disseminate it to the, even if it’s just to your leadership team. A lot of the deals get done that you only find out about at the end of the day, and find out what your role is in it, so yes” (10:517-10:711).

A structured communication process only exists within Case B. Communication happens in an unstructured manner within Cases A, C and D. Furthermore, across the cases there is a lack of effective communication of the meaning of the strategy to those responsible for implementing the strategy. This is misaligned to Neilson, Martin and Powers (2008:62) who believe that the fundamentals of effective strategy execution commence with good decision-making and the fitting sharing of information.

MacLennan (2011:55) supports this by stating that clear and specific communication is required to execute a strategy successfully. This will

contribute towards teams being very clear of what the strategy is and what is required to make it happen. The above-mentioned is emphasised by Kaplan and Norton (2008:12-13) and Franken, *et al.*, (2009:50) who accentuate that middle and lower level managers will be more interested to execute a strategy if they have good knowledge of it and how it aligns to the overall company goals.

8.4.2 Formal Change Management Interventions and Lack of Change Management

From a change management perspective the key codes that emerged was **formal change management interventions** and a **lack of change management**. Within Case A formal change management interventions are regarded as important. This is expressed accordingly *“Change management is your policemen”* (22:966-22:1001). Another participant agrees *“Change management is very important, people have to know what is happening and when it is happening”* (11:211-11:312). However, **formal change management** is not being practised within this organisation. The **lack of change management** is identified as follows *“okay, so I believe change management can be a big show stopper and quite frankly here change management is not really evident except in one of the components which is maybe training, okay, because change management is bigger than training”* (18:208-18:456).

A different participant alludes to the **lack of change management** accordingly, *“It’s more training. There is no change management that looks as far as I’m concerned about whether your role is changing and you know all of those things which is change management”* (18:1068-18:1254). In Case A, there is a **lack of change management** regarding strategy execution and project management. However, participants were not too concerned regarding this because the organisation has training interventions as alluded to *“I don’t think we have that. You know what we do have, is at least we have a training department and that sort of fills the gap for.....”* (24:565-24:696).

Within Case B, change management is regarded as a very important element during strategy execution. The organisation has **formal change management** processes in place. This is expressed in the following manner: “... *and then each business unit would have a specific sort of unit that would drive that, but there are, and it is not contradictory to what I said, but there is an overarching what we call an Enterprise Project Management team but they really get involved when it moves from a strategic position into sort of more operational.....*” (5:204-5:564).

This supported accordingly by a different participant “...*if you asked this question to me a few years ago I would say it is sort of, it's not really mature and it's not very you know sort of adopted you know in the day-to-day sort of execution process of it. But I think in terms of now where we're standing as a company that we've actually matured and we're 14/15 years old, it is very much I would say in the mature level of it being utilised*”.... (10:482-10:1274).

However, participants are of the opinion that the organisation has not performed adequately in terms of applying change management. This is due to the organisation becoming content within their business environment as alluded to “*so by virtue of the fact that we're growing like substantially high rates over the years we became complacent*” (3:1976-3:2087). A different participant attributes the **lack of change management** due to organisational change fatigue. This is expressed as follows “...*I think people in the organisation are sick and tired of all these change initiatives and change management and whatever, which leads to nothing tangible*’ (15:215-15:1074).

Change management is regarded as key to strategy execution within Case C. This is stated accordingly, “*I think it is well understood in the industry, if it is well modelled, change management is a function of the organisational culture and the leadership styles. So you need to tag along those ways*” (13:407-13:608). This is supported by a different participant “*So change management for me, well it depends on how you define change management. So if it is organisational change management, especially as organisations transform*

into digital transformation. Change management should play a pivotal role in the overall strategy, because you cannot move the business from one specific view into a new era of where the company wants to be without cultural change” (11:1171-11:1684).

Even though the CEO is attempting to drive change management as stated *“our change management gets driven by our CEO, he plays a very, very disciplined role with strategy, him and the chiefs. That’s how change management gets – so it’s really, really driven by the stakeholders of the strategy” (13:609-13:835).* The participants within Case C are of the opinion that there are no formal change management initiatives within the organisation pertaining to strategy execution even though training is provided. It is accentuated as follows *“... we don’t have change management” (16:1048-16:1082).* The participant continues by expressing *“...we’ve got a customer care function. We’ve got a training organisation that does the job of change management; do we do effective change management as part of strategy? No” (16:1108-16:1598).*

There are no **formal change management** initiatives within Case D. This is because it is not regarded as a key focus area for the organisation at this point in time during strategy execution. It is stated accordingly *“....unfortunately some of the people just believe the business or the communities must just adopt the change that gets thrust upon them and there’s no need to drive a formal change process, but that’s where most projects fail, because you don’t have proper change management” (9:735-9:1011).* The participant continues by stating that *“So there it’s just everybody believes its business as usual and you know, get on with it” (9:1168-9:1259).*

8.4.3 Summary

There is a lack of effective communication of the meaning of the strategy to be executed across all cases. Case B has structured communication whereas Cases A, C, D has unstructured communication. Within Cases A, C and D there are no formal change management interventions to effect changes as a result of projects. The above-mentioned is contrary to Hrebiniak (2006:24-25)

and Salih and Doll (2013:36) that state that strategy execution regularly involves a myriad of changes to the organisational architecture hence the significance of adequately addressing the change management aspect effectively.

Case B has formal change management interventions but employees are change fatigued due to the numerous changes that transpire within the organisation. The manner in which change management is conducted within all the cases is conflicting to Salih and Doll (2013:36), Simerson (2011:179) and Saunders, Mann and Smith (2008:1108) that are of the opinion that it is imperative for organisations to comprehend the elements and the significance of change relating to the intended strategies to be implemented. This will allow organisations insight into how the change management process must be designed and conducted. Table 8-8 below illustrates the differences and similarities within this theme.

Table 8-8: Cross-Case Comparison: Communication and Change Management

Code	Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D
Structured Communication	- Communication happens in an unstructured manner.	- A structured communication process exists.	- Communication happens in an unstructured manner.	- Communication happens in an unstructured manner.
Lack of Communication	- Lack of effective communication of the meaning of the strategy to those implementing the strategy.	- Lack of effective communication of the meaning of the strategy to those executing the strategy.	- Lack of effective communication of the meaning of the strategy to those implementing the strategy.	- A lack of effective communication of the meaning of the strategy to those executing the strategy.

Formal Change Management Interventions	- No formal change management interventions to effect changes as a result of projects.	- Formal change management interventions exist. - Employees are change fatigued.	- No formal change management interventions to effect changes as a result of projects.	- No formal change management interventions to effect changes as a result of projects.
Lack of Change Management	- User training regarded as a part of change management.	- This is not an issue within this case.	- User training regarded as a part of change management.	- Major issue within this case. No formal change management or training in place.

8.5 Systems and Tools

The way in which tools are utilised and managed during this study is described by this theme. The part systems play within this study is also highlighted. Within this theme three codes were developed. Namely, **project management structured tools utilisation**, **tools reviews**, and **systems**. These codes are discussed and analysed below. Table 8-9 below contains a description of the codes.

Table 8-9: Systems and Tools Codes

Code Name	Description	Number of Quotations
Project Management Structured Tools Utilisation	This code indicates that formal project management tools are being utilised to execute strategy. Furthermore, it alludes to the level of understanding and awareness of what tools are utilised during strategy execution.	70
Tools Reviews	This code indicates the approach utilised to review	27

	project management tools for relevance.	
Systems	This code refers to the information technology systems that are utilised by the organisation.	5

8.5.1 Systems

From a systems perspective participants within Case B were of the view that IT systems impact's strategy execution. This is asserted as follows *"now invariably the other problem with all these organisations, like I said and it's not just perennial to our organisation. I mean you see it in other bigger companies overseas. The existing IT systems are not flexible and fast enough to give you information soon enough for you to be able to turnaround your strategy"* (4:1372-4:1688). The participant continues by stating that *"... I remember I joined whenever I joined, we've been discussing a data warehouse since then, 20 years back and we never put the money in place because it was always too expensive. Now business is about big data and analytics and what have you, so now they embarked on that, but the systems and the processes and also the skills to be able to make sense of that information are not in place"* (5:324-5:752). A different participant agrees upon this *"So I think this is where we are a bit immature. Like I said we had progressed at such pace that it was actually difficult for people and the systems to keep up with that pace..."* (10:609-10:822). Cases A, C and D did not highlight the need for flexible systems to enable them to execute their strategy effectively.

8.5.2 Structured Project Management Tools & Tools Reviews

In Case, A numerous **structured project management tools** are utilised. This is expressed accordingly, *"we use Microsoft Project to track your project. You use JAS to help manage and report"* (5:201-5:291). Even though tools are available the participants are experiencing user issues with the tools as stated here *".... the challenges are that the tool is sometimes a bit slow"* (9:344-9:402).

Another participant highlights a different issue accordingly, *"... the current tools that we are using you cannot "extract" information to distribute to*

*external parties” (6:405-6:511). A different participant supports this by mentioning that “okay, so absolutely. So just to talk about the tools specifically JAS. We did have, we had it implemented and we worked for a couple of years probably on it, and then we realised, you know what, we needed to “address” certain issues. Okay and we’ve actually just gone, two or three weeks ago, we’ve just re-organised the whole of JAS” (9:1864-10:434). From a **tools review** perspective within Case A tools are frequently reviewed for appropriateness to the job being performed. This is stated accordingly “... it is a living process, and it constantly gets tweaked as where and what is needed” (10:678-10:762).*

Like Case A, Case B utilises specific **structured project management tools** within the organisation. This is as prescribed by the parent company unlike as with Case A. Within Case B participants expressed the use of these tools accordingly, *“if you look at it also, in terms of the parent company there is a standardisation methodology, because we do use a lot of off-site suppliers” (6:774-6:906). A different participant supports this accordingly “so because we work very integrated with the main shareholder it should be something that is compatible. Because it is very much in a way dictated from them, and we have strategic partnerships with Microsoft as a group company it’s sort of one of the things, it’s just the things we use. So we sort of complain about it but it is not really something, you know, with all due respect.....” (11:1850-11:2254).*

The participant continues by expressing that despite the tools not being perfect. The information provided as input to these tools is of concern. The issue is described accordingly *“the challenges are of the fact that it is in a way prescribed so you have to you know adopt it. A lot of times it is not that great to it for instance in our environment. Secondly also what happens is that with tools is that and we all say that, but we all sort of in a way ignore it, is a tool is as good as the information you input into it and the way it is used in terms of output” (12:857-12:1505). A different participant is of the opinion that staff are not effectively trained to use the tools as alluded to, “It definitely will have different tools, or use different tools. They haven’t been trained on those tools they just read a book or they read an article, or their bosses said to*

them, this is what you have to use, and they try and do all of those..." (8:1277-8:1633).

Furthermore, within this case participants state that the **tools reviews** are not regularly performed to assess if they are still appropriate as mentioned *"I don't think it is reviewed regularly, I could be wrong to be honest, but I think it's – because it's been proven to work for us I think it's probably just as things arise that they adapt to it"* (6:522-6:724).

Case C adopts a flexible approach when utilising **structured project management tools**. This is expressed accordingly *"so it depended on the specific project itself. If it was say a new tariff that got introduced that was pretty much followed with standard IT project management. Aligning the product teams, the customer care team's requirements with a business analyst and following normal Microsoft Project Office"* (3:1582-3:1887). The above-mentioned is accentuated by another participant *"whether specific techniques are being used, you know the nature of our projects is so diverse, you know, what you typically would find is you do engage a project is that you would approach a consultant that would help you with the specialist skills and techniques in that type of project to assist"* (3:1430-3:1733).

Within Case C the **tools reviews** are not proactively assessed due to constraints within the business as expressed *"....if we felt it wasn't working then there was a review on it. I mean the company just didn't have sufficient resourcing to get into it I would say that level of governance structures, because it's a very lean organisation"* (6:953-6:1185).

Structured project management tools are utilised within Case D. However, issues are encountered with these tools as stated *"So we do use some project management tools, I don't think we're very effective at use of project management"* (3:1574-3:1683). In addition to this *"So the biggest challenge is around the integration of the tools across different toolsets"* (5:1363-5:1455). **Tools reviews** are conducted every six months within this case as mentioned *"... we sit down and we look at what we're busy with and what we need to do,*

where the businesses are moving to” (5:978-5:1089). The participant adds by stating “.....no, we try and do it every six months” (5:1171-5:1208). Despite this **tools reviews** participants are of the view that the tools are not fit for purpose as alluded to “I think certainly from an agile perspective definitely tools and techniques we could be using, or better utilising and it is not pointing fingers” (5:1579-5:1727).

8.5.3 Summary

All the cases have **structured project management tools** that they utilise during strategy execution. Within Case A, B and D the utilisation of the tools is a challenge. In Case A, there is confusion as to what tools to apply during strategy execution. Within Case B, the issue is about the lack of training of staff in utilising the tools as well the lack of regular review of tools for appropriateness. Case C apply the tools in a dynamic manner and have no issues with utilising the tools. Within Cases B and C, the tools are not proactively reviewed for relevance. This is contrary to Case A where tools are often reviewed for appropriateness. Within Case D, the project management tools utilised during strategy execution are deemed ineffective and not appropriate despite the bi-annual review.

Conflicting with Case B, within Case A, C and D the training of employees to utilise the tools were not raised as an area of concern. If the tools were not fit for purpose, another tool was deployed to get the job done. Even though there are, issues experienced with the tools. Investing in tools are consistent with Cocks (2010:265), Young *et al.*, (2012:893) and Young and Grant (2014:5) who reveal that the institutions invest significantly in project management resources such as tools and skills to execute their strategy. Table 8-10 below illustrates the differences and similarities within this theme.

Table 8-10: Cross-Case Comparison: Systems and Tools

Code	Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D
Project Management	- Structured project	- Structured project	- Structured project	- Structured project

Structured Tools Utilisation	<p>management tools utilised during strategy execution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Confusion as to what tools to apply during the strategy execution. - Lack of training not raised as an issue. 	<p>management tools utilised during strategy execution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of training of staff in utilising the tools. 	<p>management tools utilised during strategy execution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apply tools dynamically and have no issues with utilising the tools. - Lack of training not raised as an issue. 	<p>management tools utilised during strategy execution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tools utilised during strategy execution are deemed ineffective. - Lack of training not raised as an issue.
Tools Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tools are often reviewed for appropriateness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tools are not proactively reviewed for relevance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tools are not proactively reviewed for relevance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bi-annual review tools. Yet tools are deemed ineffective.
Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No mention of the need for flexible systems to enable effective strategy execution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flexible (IT) systems needed for effective strategy execution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No mention of the need for flexible systems to enable effective strategy execution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No mention of the need for flexible systems to enable effective strategy execution.

8.6 Processes

The process approach is a theme that alludes to the way the organisations conduct their process discipline in relation to the role of project management during strategy execution. The theme consists of four codes as described in Table 8-11 below.

Table 8-11: Processes Codes

Code Name	Description	Number of Quotations
Project Management – End to End Strategic Management Process	This code indicates that the project management discipline is being applied during the end-to-end strategic management process. It also describes the manner in which the project management discipline is utilised within this study.	141
Formal Operationalisation of Projects	This mentions that a formal process is followed when operationalising projects. Furthermore, it alludes to the manner in which projects or initiatives are operationalised once completed.	17
Strategy Execution Framework	This code indicates that the strategy execution framework is very important to the overall well-being of organisations. In addition to this it describes the type strategy execution framework in place and how they are applied.	61
Process Improvement	This code asserts that the current processes utilised by the organisation must be perpetually reviewed for improvement.	26

8.6.1 Project Management – End to End Strategic Management Process

From a **project management, end-to-end strategic management process** code perspective. Within Case A there is a defined project management discipline is utilised. This is expressed accordingly *“We do have a way of work, and the way of work is we do have a pack with flow diagrams which did*

not exist before” (11:1040-11:1154). Another participant as follows “I would say that we follow PMBOK” (3:1340-3:1378) supports this. Another participant states, *“It’s not PRINCE, it is more PMBOK, it is watered down.....”* (7:526-7:580). A different participant agrees accordingly *“I would say that here we follow PMBOK”* (3:1339-3:1378).

The project management discipline is primarily applied during the strategy execution phase and to a lesser extent during the strategy formulation phase within Case A. This is asserted accordingly, *“It depends in which area. So, some areas only the execution and some areas the planning as well”* (5:657-5:753). The above-mentioned is supported by a different participant *“.....and I think that will sort of take care of that upfront planning and whatever strategy and whatever else, and then it will move into obviously the execution part or whatever else”* (8:976-8:1160).

Furthermore, the project management function within Case A is utilised in a dynamic manner. This is stated accordingly, *“what I like about it is it’s a hybrid take, it’s where they take, it’s PRINCE, PMBOK, Agile and I’ve seen some things of SaFe 4.0....”* (4:723-4:946). The participant continues by stating, *“So you’ve got the freedom to hybridise what is going to work for your project”* (10:1583-10:1662).

Within Case B, a number of different project management methodologies are utilised. It is expressed accordingly, *“....I think it is a combination of them because originally it was definitely PMBOK”* (6:1450-6:1535). This is supported by another participant accordingly: *“.... that was very much driven by the main shareholder as well, but I know if I just look at in terms of some of the people what sort of courses they’re doing, then it’s sort of – a lot of them now because of the way I think project management courses are sort of structured they go for PRINCE2, but I think underlying the PMBOK is probably by far the most sort of used and known”* (7:204-7:606). Another participant supported this accordingly *“.... not strictly PMBOK or you know – what’s the other one? Prince 2....”* (2:1681-2:2113).

Within Case B, the project management discipline is applied during strategy execution and the strategy formulation phase. However, the project management discipline is primarily utilised during strategy execution. This is expressed as follows *“It is end-to-end but it is not done in a very project management style...”* (7:906-7:1070). Another participant supported this accordingly *“So I would look at project management more in terms of the execution, not the formulation of it”* (4:1317-4:1414). A different participant concurred *“Okay, so within the end-to-end process very little in terms of the rigid project management discipline, however, we are quite rigorous in terms of managing the process from the end-to-end perspective because obviously we have board commitments, there are deliverables that need to be met”* (3:763-3:1153).

Within Case C, a formal project management framework is utilised. This is alluded to as follows *“So from a project management perspective when the new management team got brought in 2012 we really established a programme and project office and these were two separate functions within the organisation. The reason for all that was to look at end-to-end execution and alignment in order to avoid silo mentality with certain things in the end-to-end execution got missed* (3:982-3:1365).

In Case C the project management discipline is applied in a dynamic manner as mentioned by a participant *“So we don’t only have a standard approach. As I said for example the guys that roll out networks, they’ll be typical engineers; they’ll probably have a very strong PMBOK approach or a project manager approach like PMBOK. Now I’m not aware of how they do that, in an IT related project you know – what I’m trying to say is I think whatever project manager is in place, will take his past experience, in other words there isn’t an organisational stamp on it, it’s very much dependent on the individual’s approach”* (6:628-6:1170). This supported by another participant *“It depended on the specific project itself....”* (3:1582-3:1887).

Despite participants within Case C having different views of where in the strategic management process the project management discipline is utilised.

The majority of participants were of the view that this is mainly used during strategy execution. This is asserted as follows, *“It was after conceptualisation which utilised once the decision was made for implementation. But the ideation phase came from I would say various business units.....and then only programme or project management get involved”* (4:1181-4:1542). Another participant supports this *“... I think it’s probably going to be in execution, mostly because I mean project management – and then also the setting of the strategy is probably a project management process as well”* (3:1363-3:1554).

Within Case D a range of project management disciplines are applied. This is expressed accordingly *“So it’s a combination of PMBOK and PRINCE”* (4:365-4:394). In addition, this organisation is experimenting by adapting these methodologies in pursuit of optimal strategy execution performance as mentioned *“so we developed our own methodology really aligned to those two, we’re trying to move to a more agile....* (4:488-4:707). There is a drive for the dynamic application of project management within this case as asserted by a participant *“I think it’s been suggested here and there and everywhere that maybe we should do this and try this and do that, etcetera, and that is why we’re sitting with a bit of a hybrid”* (4:402-4:580).

In Case D, the participants agreed that the project management discipline is only applied during the strategy execution stage. This is stated as follows *“so I think my understanding of programme office, I only get involved in the, you know, once things are very much decided around the execution of it”* (4:1272-4:1421).

Cases A, B, C and D have defined project management disciplines that they utilise. All the cases apply a range of project management disciplines depending on the need of the organisation at that point in time. E.g. PMBOK, Prince 2 or Agile. This is aligned to Kwak and Anbari (2009:435) and Mir and Pinnington (2013:202) who mention that project management is applied in numerous industries to implement complex projects within time, budget and scope.

The project management discipline is applied during strategy execution within Cases A, B and C. In addition to this, it is applied during strategy formulation within Cases A and C. Within Case B, the project management discipline is applied during the strategy formulation and strategy execution stage but primarily utilised during the strategy execution phase. Cases A, B and C are consistent with Cocks (2010:265) who states that the attention for project management is planning and executing and the same applies to strategy execution. Alsudiri, Al-Karaghoul and Eldabi (2013:602) supports the project management presence during strategy formulation by stating that in understanding the strategy, the project manager can gradually deliver the strategy and its advancement to the leadership team during execution. They continue by mentioning that with the project manager being entrenched end to end from strategic planning to execution the project manager has a complete view of the strategic objectives. Therefore, it can assist effective strategy execution. The project management discipline is only applied during the strategy execution phase within Case D.

Even though the project management discipline is utilised across all the cases. Karra (2008:98) who found with reservations that strategy development and strategy execution is being aligned with project management. This study was conducted within three banking institutions in SA. This was complemented by Young and Grant (2014:10) who in another study conducted in a Whole of Government setting in Australia found that forty percent of the strategy achieved could be contributed to effective project management due to the steadiness of the atmosphere within which the strategy was executed.

8.6.2 Formal Operationalisation of Projects

Within Case A, there is a formal process of handing over projects to the business. This is stated accordingly *“the way we operationalise something now is you know, you do implement it and we have what we call a warranty period. So the project manager and the project team will support that project for a month after implementation”* (21:482-21:707). This is supported by

another participant as follows “... *there is month support that they now built into the project*” (9:1460-9:1549). In Case A, there is no mention of any issues experienced with this process.

The operationalisation of projects within Case B is also formalised as described by a participant “*there is a handover process, that handover process takes let’s say from the time an initiative has been finalised. It’s tested from a number of perspectives, are the platforms performing? Are they producing what they are supposed to be producing? For a certain period of time by the developers, then there’s an over-lock with the operations that once that stability and maturity has been proven then it goes into the operational side*” (12:1986-12:2462). A different participant concurs by mentioning that “.... *as soon as we’ve got the drop-dead date that’s when we end the project, it’s already integrated into the business. So we actually run side-by-side with the business, they are not held in isolation*” (9:567-9:935). No concerns with this process were raised in this case.

Case C has a handover process in place that must be complied with. This is asserted accordingly “*we did quite a lot of work in order to always include the operational teams in the project execution from the start, and also in the workflow processes, and how we basically got it into standard operational processes*” (9:2144-9:2365). This is supported by another participant “.... *by nature of their work, are very vigorous at handing it over*” (14:744-14:813).

Within Case D, a process is followed to operationalise projects. This is highlighted in the following manner “*so most projects go through an operationalisation phase where, if it’s a new product we go through the trade marketing team and it’s part of the overall project plan. It’s not just development of new product it’s also the rollout of that new project. So it involves the training of the customer relationship managers, the call centres, the merchants and then at the end of that advertising and marketing to the consumer*” (8:327-8:768). Within this case these are issues with the process as asserted by a participant “*so within our environment very poorly. I think the “handover” from Programme Office/IT back into the business is we can do a*

lot better, again, I'm not apportioning blame, I think it is on both sides of the fence where that process can be managed a lot better. So yes, they operationalised poorly" (8:1343-8:1653).

Across the four cases, a process is followed to operationalise projects. Only Case D indicated that their operationalisation process requires improvement as it is not effective at the moment.

8.6.3 Strategy Execution Framework

Case A follows a structured strategy execution framework. This is stated accordingly by participants *"If you think about it, we've got group and then we've got local. Group has got their things that they want but it is dependent on us to supply some of things. So they've got projects" (18:1751-18:1939).* This is supported by another participant as follows *"well if you look at it is you've got your board doing their high levels, and then it gets pushed onto your execs, your EO's and then they sit with their GM's. So he works his plan out, so then you unpack the high level from the board, he breaks it down further as what he wants, the high level into his business stream and then he gives it to his GM's and they unpack it further, Senior Manager, Manager, Supervisor ..."(19:346-19:767).*

In this case there is a drive to enhance the strategy execution framework as mentioned *".... and also I think one of the moves here is, and I've just heard it, is the new Go to Market (GTM) process that they're going to follow. So I think that GTM process will cover sort of what the business is currently lacking and it will just harness what they want to do I think" (8:843-8:1306).* This is supported by a different participant in the following manner *".... at this point they seem to be working on a new process that they're following a methodology and I'm not sure what it is based on, but it is specific to this organisations environment" (3:1102-3:1275).*

Within Case B, strategy execution is regarded as a very important competency. This is asserted as follows *"It's the execution which makes the difference" (6:1656-6:1702).* Participants concurred that there is a strategy

execution framework followed within this organisation. However, they differed in terms of whether this framework was formalised within the organisation. The participants expressed the following “... *by virtue of the fact that we’re growing some would say despite ourselves, there was not specific formal methodology or process that was followed in executing the strategy*” (3:1175-3:1350). Another participant differs accordingly “*So is there a specific process and methodology. Yes, there is, and it is quite structured but in a way it is very dynamic as well*” (5:1130-5:1268). Despite this disagreement, within Case B, this is the praxis followed within the organisation. However, it is that not necessarily formalised by the organisation but has become a way of work in the organisation. Hence, the processes are applied in a dynamic manner.

Case C has a defined end-to-end strategic management process that is driven by the CEO. This is expressed accordingly “*so we have a strategic process that was signed off and formalised with our shareholders. So there’s a structured strategy process and it talks around regular, I think it is updates...*” (3:417-3:850). This is supported by a different participant who states that “... *so before a product is launched, there is a big cross-functional meeting with the impacts on customer care, and the impact on marketing, and then came from everything else that was discussed*” (14:927-14:1786).

Within this case, the process is applied in a dynamic manner. This is highlighted accordingly “... *because the company is fairly resource optimised I would say a mixture between fairly formalised processes and ad hoc processes*” (3:836-3:980). The participant continues by stating that “... *and that’s why I say depending on the complexity we would implement either just project management or programme management and project management*” (5:219-5:368).

Case D also regards strategy execution as of crucial importance to the organisation. It is expressed accordingly “*strategy execution, so it’s absolutely an enabler*” (7:1369-7:1543). Another participant supports this by stating that “*the greatest strategies aren’t executed, and as per our earlier conversation what’s always interested me is, is I would have said devising strategy is the*

harder part and executing the easiest, and in fact it is the other way around” (13:778-13:1018).

Even though strategy execution is regarded as important. Within this case there is no strategy execution methodology applied as stated, *“So from a group perspective there is no real methodology” (3:301-3:357).* Furthermore, Case D has no business agreed upon end-to-end strategic management process. This is highlighted as follows *“So I’d say, number one, clear strategy, clear goals clearly defined and having everybody on board and aligned, and then we touched on it earlier but having a sort of performance management, you know having everyone’s goals talking to that strategy which we lack” (10:1567-10:1835).* Within this case, there are praxis, which have not been formally adopted by the organisation, which are being followed during strategy execution.

Within Cases A and C there are defined strategy execution frameworks that are being followed. In Case A, this framework is being reviewed for appropriateness. While in Case C the framework is being adhered to and followed. Despite no formal strategy execution methodologies within Cases B and D. There are strategy execution praxis that have developed informally within these cases that are being followed by staff within the organisations.

8.6.4 Process Improvement

Within Case A, participants were of the view that the processes pertaining to strategy execution and project management must be improved. This is expressed as follows *“I think there is probably room for improvement” (9:498-9:545).* A different participant supports this by expressing that *“I think there is place for a lot of improvement” (6:1042-6:1089).* The participant continues by mentioning, *“I am aware that we are now expanding almost to go back to what we had where we have an enterprise control...” (12:860-12:998).*

Participants within Case B were of the view that their organisation have become complacent and have failed to ensure their framework remains relevant in terms of strategy execution. This is asserted as follows *“.... look*

like I said it was easy to meet your targets and your budgets and whatever without having to go into the detail, and ensuring that you managed the process from start to finish. It's becoming more and more critical and it's becoming more and more accepted that people and the CEO and whatever are starting to realise that it's not about defining the strategy, it's about execution" (6:316-6:716).

The participant continues by stating that "... *It's about realising that essentially you have to start differentiating on other issues rather than price, rather than technology, and you have to start engaging and managing your customers more effectively. So your strategy essentially should be strategy as opposed to tactics....*" (15:1565-15:2082). This is supported by a different participant who mentions that "*so the inability to actually change as the industry changes, because like we see now. Telco is not just mobile it's a lot more than mobile and if you look at it in any other sector as well, we are reaching into the financial services sector in terms of money.... and the ability to adapt to that very quickly can either, well if you don't have the ability to adapt to it very quickly it will kill you*" (11:1203-11:1691).

Within Case C, participants are of the opinion that proactive improvement of processes is required in order for the organisation to deliver to its customers. This is asserted accordingly "*so the investment is actually not into the nuts and the bolts but it's actually challenging the status quo and the paradigm of project management, which has brought the scene into a new project mode and understanding and skillset*" (16:483-16:1444). The participant continues "... *it is very clear that the opportunities that exist in strategy now and in the future if you could get different insights through more data, you could save yourself from a lot of pain, you can probably be faster to market and you can also course correct much quicker once you've launched your strategy....*" (16:483-16:1444). A different participant supports this by stating, "*So we've almost been quite focused on our strategy but maybe in a little bit of an ill disciplined way*" (3:866-3:1405).

Within Case D participants agreed that the processes require improvement. This is highlighted accordingly “.... *but I think there is definitely a desire to be more agile*” (4:858-4:915). A different participant supports this as follows “*so we’ve never had a consolidated Project or Programme view or whatever the case is*” (6:218-6:435).

Across the cases, all the participants concurred that the frameworks in terms of strategy execution must be improved. Case C emphasised that this must be done in a proactive manner. Whereas Cases A, B and D highlighted the need for improvement but did not emphasise that this be done proactively. The table below illustrates the differences and similarities within this theme.

8.6.5 Summary

Cases A, B and C have defined frameworks. Case D has a loosely defined framework that is not documented. The utilisation of frameworks is aligned to Morgan, *et al.*, (2007), Thompson, *et al.*, (2007), Kaplan and Norton (2008), Franken, *et al.*, (2009) and MacLennan (2011) that recommend a framework approach to strategy execution. They specify what must be done in order to execute a strategy. Cases A and B receive their strategic direction from a parent company perspective. In contrast Cases C and D are very much CEO driven from a strategic direction perspective.

Within this theme, there is a lack of process ownership across Cases A, B and D. Especially pertaining to the project management and strategy execution functions. Cases A and B receive parent company support yet they continue to struggle in ensuring process discipline. In Case D it appears process are not formalised hence there is uncertainty as to what process must be followed. Case C has defined adhered to processes. The project management discipline is applied during strategy formulation and execution within Cases A and C. It is applied during strategy execution and in an ad-hoc manner within Case B. The project management discipline is only applied during strategy execution within Case D. Table 8-12 below illustrates the differences and similarities within this theme.

Table 8-12: Cross Cases Comparison: Processes

Code	Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D
Project Management – End to End Strategic Management Process	- Defined project management disciplines utilised. - Project Management discipline applied during strategy execution and formulation.	- Defined project management discipline utilised. - Project Management discipline applied during strategy execution.	- Defined project management discipline utilised. - Project Management discipline applied during strategy execution and formulation.	- Defined project management discipline utilised. - Project Management discipline applied during strategy execution.
Formal Operationalisation of Projects	- Process followed to operationalise projects.	- Process followed to operationalise projects.	- Process followed to operationalise projects.	- Process followed to operationalise projects.
Strategy Execution Framework	- Defined strategy execution framework.	- No formal strategy execution methodology. - Informal strategy execution praxis that have developed.	- Defined strategy execution framework.	- No formal strategy execution methodology. - Informal strategy execution praxis that have developed.
Process Improvement	- Identified the need for	- Identified the need for	- Identified the need for	- Identified the need for

	process improvement -Proactive improvement not indicated.	process improvement. -Proactive improvement not indicated.	proactive process improvement .	process improvement. -Proactive improvement not indicated.
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8.7 Skills and Resourcing

This theme refers to the skills and resourcing evident within the cases. The theme consists of five codes namely, project management skills, strategy execution skills, experience, training and resource constraints. These are discussed below in Table 8-13.

Table 8-13: Skills and Resourcing Codes

Code Name	Description	Number of Quotations
Project Management Skills	This code refers to the level of project management skills within the cases.	76
Strategy Execution Skills	This code refers to the level of strategy execution skills within the cases.	78
Experience	This code describes the type of experience participants have. This includes work, industry, organisational and technical experience.	110
Training	This code refers to the organisations commitment to the training and investing in staff.	35
Resource Constraints	This code indicates the resource constraints that are experienced within the cases.	26

8.7.1 Project Management Skills

Within Case A investments have been made to upskill and train staff regarding the project management discipline. This is asserted accordingly “....
I know specifically that the organisation has actually put a huge investment in

getting all of the project managers through PMBOK....” (10:1594-10:1718). The organisations commitment to investing in their staff is supported “I know that some of the lower-levels, people that are not necessarily project managers yet, that is like in the PMO office. They’ve been going to internal project management courses or whatever else where I’m actually a mentor for one of the ladies. So they are investing....” (11:285-11:577).

Furthermore, participants within Case A are of the opinion that staff have the desired skills to perform their job optimally. This is mentioned as follows, *“We’ve got some amazing project managers here with amazing skills. What I like about it is everybody is willing to help each other and assist each other” (17:1357-17:1511).*

The project management skills are further emphasised *“.... I think the project managers that are here, a lot of them are certified or they’ve actually gone through at least the PMBOK training” (9:292-9:425).* This organisation has committed to ensuring staff have the appropriate skills as stated *“.... I think we do have the right staff but I’ll talk my heart. When they started with the restructure, they said they’re going to re-Interview everybody. They said to be a project manager in this company you must have the right qualifications....” (22:453-22:699).*

Within this case, participants believe that the organisation does not fully comprehend the project management role because of their lack of understanding what the role entails. This is alluded to as follows *“.... your biggest problem lies with Managers, SMs and GMs because people always forget is, because they’re not so versed in project management” (14:1053-14:1196).* The participant continues by mentioning *“So now the bean counter gets rid of the guy with the skill set and they keep the guy that’s destructive to the team” (21:817 -21:934).* This lack of project management understanding is emphasised as follows *“Pure and simple, is that people don’t understand the role of the project manager, the value it adds to them. They see it as an*

impediment because I'm taking them away from their work..." (21:1433-21:1659).

In Case A, the staff have adequate project management skills due to the organisation investing in training for them. However, the organisation lacks an understanding of what the project management role entails and how this will benefit the organisation.

Participants within Case B are of the view that the organisation had the right project management skills. Currently participants are of the view that the right skills are limited within this organisation as expressed *"I'm not sure I can give you a straight answer or an answer. I was training in the past. I'm sure there is people who are going through process to get the certificates but it's not all that visible. All these other things, training on networking and training on pure engineering disciplines and whatever, those are easy to manage, and those are easy to quantify. In project management there were initiatives in the past. They are not as visible currently as they were in past"* (8:1762-8:2281).

The above-mentioned is agreed upon *"I think five years ago it was really significant. It was extremely significant in a sense that we had a whole division that was their whole existence was around training and educating people about project management throughout the organisation. So literally we had a travelling team talking about it, well that doesn't exist anymore"* (13:625-13:966). The lack of skills is further supported *"Yes and no, so it does depend. Where the industry is moving and especially within the digital space, invariably there is probably a 20% to 30% skills gap. So the short answer is we don't always have the right skills"* (7:353-7:574).

Within Case B, there is a project management skills gap that is not being adequately addressed at this point in time.

Case C participants are of the opinion that the organisation recruits very skilled resources. This is alluded to as follows *"I do think the quality of people we definitely have is our strength. So I think we have got the right skills. A lot*

of people come to join the business because of this innovation type of business that it is, and the learning they're going to have. So you get people with good quality skills coming to want to work and so we have a long List of people wanting to join our business...." (11:1187-11:1662). Staff having the appropriate is concurred upon *".... again all the project managers were certified with PMBOK. And I mean one of the first things we did when we did the new management in 2012 was to re-establish a project management framework in the company and across the organisation, especially across the technical organisation"* (5:1610-5:1928).

Within Case C, there are highly skilled project management staff as described by participants.

Case D does not have adequate project management skills. This is stated accordingly *"So I think we've got a long way to go to. We have some skilled people, but I think the adoption of the process defined is not there, the use of it in the business is quite low"* (5:399-5:579). The lack of project management skills is emphasised *".... on an individual discipline on specifically agile, I'd say we're probably below average...."* (5:501-5:589). It is supported accordingly *"I think it's just the roles around coordinating those activities and whose responsibilities they are. I think that is where it falls a little flat"* (8:1827-8:1987).

Case D does not have the desired project skills currently as suggested above.

8.7.2 Strategy Execution Skills

Participants within Case A are of the opinion that strategy execution skills are lacking within their organisation due to the restructure. This is described as follows *".... band threes and they were made band two's, so all the guys left. I would imagine you know, a solution architect, you know you can be the best solution architect and you come into a company and you don't know about the system knowledge and you don't have the domain knowledge. It is going to take you – you know, so there I saw a lot of intellectual capital and it moved out, and that was a very stupid thing I also thought they did"* (19:409-19:852).

The lack of strategy execution skills within Case A is highlighted *“So the guys that do have knowledge, the intellectual capital is not sitting in the organisation it is sitting with vendors” (19:994-19:1229). “No. Currently what I’m seeing on the floor, no” (10:829-10:876).*

Within Case B there is a concern regarding the level of strategy execution skills. This is asserted accordingly by participants *“.... now business is about big data and analytics and what have you, so now they embarked on that, but the systems and the processes and also the skills to be able to make sense of that information are not in place” (5:324-5:752).* The participant continues *“.... that’s why the realisation now where you don’t necessarily have room to grow in terms of connections. That’s why it’s dawning on people now that it’s about execution.... you have to formalise that process a hell of a lot better than what I did in the past. I need to start using all those tools and methodologies to be able to manage and implement my strategy and manage my processes effectively from start to finish” (6:1704-6:2171).* The above-mentioned is supported *“Yes and no, so it does depend. Where the industry is moving and especially within the digital space, invariably there is probably a 20% to 30% skills gap. So the short answer is we don’t always have the right skills” (7:353-7:574).*

Participants within Case B are of the view that the demand for various types of strategy execution skills will be ever changing. This is highlighted as follows *“So skills are going to keep on changing depending on how the market behaves and what the priorities are. There’s a lack of data and analytical skills. So I do the analytics, I pull out numbers, what do those numbers say? You know it’s stats, what do I use them for? So again it’s the same thing as structure, that’s something which is in a state of flux, and it’s going to keep on changing depending on what your priorities are” (13:1189-13:1626).* The need for strategy execution skills is concurred upon *“.... there’s that realisation that now essentially if you’re not going to be about acquisition, it’s about customer value management. How do you get that understanding? It’s about*

analytics...I need all of those skills. So the realisation is there and the strategies and it's a process to bring those to fruition" (13:1627-13:2174)].

Within Case B a strategy execution skills issue is hampering effective strategy execution.

In Case C, participants differed in the level of strategy execution skills within the organisation. Certain participants felt that the organisation has the required strategy execution skills and some felt there is a skills gap in this regard. Those that felt the organisation has the required skills stated the following *"Internally we have had a lot of turnover in our business in the last few years because of the uncertainty, but it gets compensated by the quality of people we brought in. I mean the people I've personally seen come in is unbelievable" (11:1663-11:1933)*. This is supported accordingly *"I think that our staff at all levels are pretty good. Going back to my comment earlier about a fairly, kind of unstructured strategic process" (15:372-15:734)*.

However, the majority participants felt that there is still a strategy execution skills gap. This is alluded to as follows *"So, that's I think of particular interest... It's back in the 90's and to this day, in my opinion remains a big gap in business. You get strategy, and then you get the doers, and then you sometimes get a big gap in between" (2:907-2:1145)*. The shortcoming in strategy execution skills is concurred upon *"Where I think we are a little bit lacking in strategic skills is the day to day problem identification, problem resolution. So, in other words, I don't think we have been very good at empowering our workforce with those type of skills that I've seen for example in a manufacturing environment. (15:1109-15:1408)*.

The participant emphasises the strategy execution skills issue *".... following-up of next steps, things that might not necessarily be part of your day to day job in the call centre, but problem solving ability. I don't think we've done enough of that, and again not lots of businesses are not very good at that" (15:1830-15:2134)*. In addition to this, an example is provided illustrating the

strategy execution skills gap *“So you’ll see other telco’s they have been recruiting a lot of people out of the banking industry, we ourselves have just brought a new chief out of the credit industry. So I think one of the big barriers is getting old telco dogs to try and implement something new and that’s a real challenge, it’s a real challenge” (18:1019-18:1346).*

Within Case C, the lack of adequate strategy execution skills is an area of concern for this organisation.

In Case D, there is a lack of strategy execution skills. This is expressed in the following manner *“No, at the moment I think the answer would be no. Second of all, how do you do that? You know you don’t send them on skills training now. I think the project per se can be used very strongly in people developing skills through the actual work that they’re doing. So that’s what we aim to do, so it’s through the execution people will be learning new skills” (9:1621-9:1992).*

The lack of strategy execution skills within Case D is further illustrated *“If you know one part of the business doesn’t know what the other part of the business is doing you can’t reasonably expect a strategy to be accomplished where that it encompasses both those departments. So it’s not going to happen” (12:1597-12:1834).* It is supported as follows *“I don’t think many organisations can get pure agile right, and from a maturity perspective we’re nowhere near there” (5:1178-5:1296).* All the participants within Case D concurred that there is a strategy execution skills gap within the organisation.

8.7.3 Experience

Across Cases A, B and C participants have significant work, industry and technical experience pertaining to the role of project management during strategy execution. Within Case C, only one participant is new to the industry. Within Case D, only one participant has significant experience within the telecommunications industry as well as the technical expertise. The remaining two participants are new to the telecommunications industry but all the participants have the necessary experience and exposure to understand the concepts under study. Hence, across all the cases there is a substantial

amount of understanding of the concepts under study to contribute to this research. Table 8-14 below summarises the experience per participant per case.

Table 8-14: Cross-Case Comparison: Experience

Participant	Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D
Participant 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Works in the Information Systems IS environment. -Dealing with various projects. -28 years' work experience. -This participant is also a programme support manager on the information security programme. -Has matric and numerous certificates ranging from technical in the IS and project management frameworks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Research and Strategy focus. -Been at the organisation for probably 15 years. -Qualifications, Natural Science Degree and then Has an MBA, Masters in Chemistry and a research background. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Responsible for managing strategy execution and business planning for this organisation. -This person is a chartered accountant by qualification and has been in the telecommunications industry for close to 20 years with different organisations. -This person has always been involved in managing strategy execution within the organisations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Over 20 years work experience. -Is on the committee responsible for strategy execution within this organisation. -This person is an industrial engineer by qualification and has been in the telecommunications industry for a significant number of years in various roles
Participant 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Has a B.Com Degree in Informatics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Electrical Engineering degree, Post 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -New to the telecommunications industry and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Fairly new to the telecommunications

	<p>and a Project Management Professional PMP qualification.</p> <p>-Has significant experience within the telecommunications industry across the entire value chain as a project manager.</p>	<p>Grad in Industrial Engineering, Post Grad in Computer and Software Engineering.</p> <p>-Been in the Industry in various Roles and in various Companies for the last 28 years.</p> <p>-Been with the organisation for 18 years in various roles.</p> <p>-Started in Engineering, started the product area in 2000. Moved onto management, products, services and strategy.</p>	<p>this organisation.</p> <p>-Is a mechanical engineer by qualification.</p> <p>-Very experienced operational transformation background pertaining to strategic management and execution.</p> <p>-Currently responsible for managing the business operational strategy and commercial projects.</p>	<p>ions industry and this organisation.</p> <p>-29 years working experience.</p> <p>-Has a Masters in Business Leadership (MBL) degree.</p> <p>–</p> <p>-Experienced operational transformation background pertaining to strategy execution.</p> <p>-Currently responsible for managing business operational strategy via projects.</p>
Participant 3	<p>-Is a senior project manager within the organisation.</p> <p>-Possesses a wealth of experience within the telecommunications industry.</p>	<p>-Part of the strategy team at group level.</p> <p>-Role is principally three things, to help to develop the strategy, secondly to provide strategic assistance to the</p>	<p>-Responsible for bridging the gap between strategy and implementation via programmes and projects within this organisation.</p> <p>-Is a chemical engineer by</p>	<p>-Responsible for managing the product strategy and implementation of these products via projects within this organisation.</p> <p>-Has an</p>

	<p>-Has a PMP certification that alludes to her technical skills.</p>	<p>business around unblocking areas that are blocked and then lastly to be thought leaders on certain topics within the Telco space.</p> <p>-14 years in IT and I've been in the organisation for the last year and a bit.</p> <p>-Principally working in strategy formulation and execution for the last six years.</p>	<p>qualification and has worked within the information technology sector for a significant number of years.</p> <p>-Working experience encompasses management consulting, banking and telecommunications.</p>	<p>Information Systems degree and has worked within the telecommunications sector for a substantial number of years.</p>
Participant 4	<p>-Is a Senior Project Manager specifically an Information Systems Project Manager.</p> <p>-Hails from a top consulting firm in the project management field and has a certified PMP qualification.</p>	<p>-A large chunk of my career was in technology and management consulting.</p> <p>-8 years ago I joined technology area in the business analysis and demand management. - Then moved into group strategy.</p>	<p>-Occupied the role of CIO for over 4 years.</p> <p>-Responsible for information technology strategy and provided input to the strategy execution process.</p> <p>-Has 7 years both local and international experience within telecommunications</p>	<p>-Fourth participant not interviewed within Case D due sufficient to information provided by the 3 participants interviewed.</p>

			ons and a range of technology companies.	
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8.7.4 Training

In Case A, the organisation has invested in upskilling their staff to enable effective strategy execution. This is mentioned as follows “.... *I know specifically that the organisation has actually put a huge investment in getting all of the project managers through PMBOK*” (10:1593-10:1718). This is supported here “....*was basically you know “recreating” an IS PMO...*” (10:1027-10:1150). Another participant is of the opinion that a significant investment has been made within the organisation as stated “....*if you look at the amount of money that they gave, it is big....*” (12:1431-12:1494).

Within Case B, there is not a significant additional investment in the training of staff to enable them to ensure effective strategy execution. This is expressed as follows “*so the investment I think was made and I think the investment was made in a sense that it is part and parcel of the way we work rather than as a parallel to it*” (13:968-13:1176). The lack of investment in training is further highlighted “*In project management there were initiatives in the past. They are not as visible currently as they were in past*” (8:1762-8:2281).

The participants in Case C indicated that their organisation invests in employing highly skilled employees. This is alluded to as follows “.... *I think our biggest investment has been hiring people*” (6:1048-6:1104). This is supported as follows “.... *we don’t have, look I guess you could say have invested in people like myself. Individuals to come and run that churn programme for example, but in terms of like a technical project management system I do know now that we have Sharepoint and some people use a bit of Sharepoint very little again, being a telco and on a networks organisation. I think that they probably have made investments that I’m not aware of, but you know, is it something that we use broadly? Not that I’m aware of*” (9:1426-9:1931).

Case D indicated that they invest in the training of their staff. This is highlighted as follows *“So far we’ve made a reasonably significant Investment. We contracted an independent project Management organisation to assist us in developing our methodologies and frameworks”* (6:557-6:736). This is supported accordingly *“.... look I think generally we have the right staff for the right skills. We do send people on quite a lot of training”* (8:940-8:1064).

8.7.5 Resource Constraints

Case A is experiencing resource constraints during strategy execution and on a daily basis. Participants assert this accordingly *“.... that is where the biggest problem is, when the guys says, but you keep on using my operational guys to do your projects. That is the biggest thing that you get, the people don’t have sufficient operational people to implement projects correctly”* (22:515-22:781). This is supported as follows *“.... to have project managers run eight to twelve projects. No! No”* (16:1108-16:1172).

Having these constraints, results in quality issues being experienced as alluded to by participants *“.... we might slipup on updating a date here or there.... I think if you’ve got 12 projects and you run around like a headless chicken you might forget to go and update a risk or an issue date”* (9:1227-9:1447). In support of the above-mentioned participants are of the opinion that dedicated resources will address this issue as stated *“.... what I think will work is if we actually have dedicated resources for a project, okay, or maybe a resource working on two projects alone. Because I think dedicated resources, ... you don’t have five different projects that you spend five minutes and then it takes you 15 minutes to refocus on something else. Whereas if you perhaps were dedicated, you could sit a week, you do the solution, you get done to a point where the documentation is all done”* (18:1682-18:2174). Within this case, the lack of resources adversely affects strategy execution.

Case B is also experiencing resource constraints as described by participants *“... to be quite honest. I think they have the appropriate skills. I think their lack of focus is actually completely and utterly the fact that most of the units are*

under resourced” (20:731-20:906). This is supported by a different participant accordingly “So your question around skills, they’ve got the appropriate skills but they don’t have enough time to do it literally....” (20:1642-20:1792). In Case B there is no indication that resource constraints negatively affects strategy execution.

Case C operates a lean organisation. Even with this approach, they experience resource constraints. This is expressed as follows “.... *I mean the company just didn’t have sufficient resourcing to get into I would say that level of governance structures, because it’s a very lean organisation*” (6:953-6:1185). In addition to this the turnover of staff has contributed to the resource constraints as stated, “*I think if you look at turnaround of people the challenge is the knowledge transfer and the skill-set. I think that is the biggest challenge that we have faced, we’ve had massive turnaround and you know turnover of people,*” (6:672-6:906).

Within Case C participants have alluded to this impacting strategy execution in a harmful manner as mentioned “...yes, because you very often you got a guy that’s running a call centre, that’s a very busy job, but I need him to implement a project for me as well, so how? The business has had this problem for a long time. Is that how do I free up people to from their line holes to help execute strategic projects? (20:1212-20:1521). this is supported accordingly “.....*I’m a little bit of a lone ranger on this churn reduction programme. I have literally no people, so the analysis, the recommendations and the implementation of the things that I want to do are very much determined on other functions*” (12:639-12:1064).

Interestingly Case D has not indicated that they are experiencing any resource constraints.

8.7.6 Summary

Across Cases A and C the staff have the required project management skills whereas Cases B and D has a project management skills gap. All cases have

a strategy execution skills issue. Participants within all cases have significant work and technical experience. Only Case B is experiencing a lack of training investment. Resource constraints are not being experienced by Case D. Table 8-15 below contains the similarities and differences within this theme.

Table 8-15: Cross-Case Comparison: Skills and Resourcing

Codes	Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D
Project Management Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff have the desired skills. - Lack of understanding project management role. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skills gap. - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highly skilled staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skills gap.
Strategy Execution Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of skills.
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significant work, industry and technical experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significant work, industry and technical experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significant work, industry and technical experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significant work and technical experience. - Lack of industry experience.
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investments made. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of investment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investments made in recruiting staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investments made.
Resource Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experiencing constraints. - Affecting strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experiencing constraints. - Not affecting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experiencing constraints. - Affecting strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not experiencing resource constraints.

	execution.	strategy execution.	execution.	
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8.8 Discussion of Findings

Within Cases B and C, they are aware of the threats and opportunities posed by the external environment regarding effective strategy execution. However, no proactive plans are in place to manage this. Cases A and D did not refer to the external environment influencing strategy execution. Across all the cases, the participants indicated that there is a lack of organisational architecture realignment during strategy execution. Within Cases A, B and D this can be attributed to a lack of corporate process ownership. Whereas in Case C this can be attributed to a lack of focus due to higher priority items taking preference.

Cases A and D evidenced a lack of project selection governance. Within all the cases the selection and prioritisation of projects is primarily financially based even though they a holistic criteria is defined. The project management discipline is applied primarily during strategy execution across all the cases. Cases A, B and D demonstrated a lack of corporate process ownership when executing their strategy. There is a lack of project management and strategy execution governance within Cases A, B and D. Communication is unstructured across Cases A, C and D. Across all cases there is a lack of communication and change management as well as a lack of culture realignment to the strategy being executed. This can be attributed to the fact that project prioritisation is financially driven. Across Cases A, B and D there is a lack of leadership support during strategy execution, which hampers effective strategy execution within these three cases.

Cases A, B and D are experiencing issues with utilising the defined tools hence the tools are not producing the desired results during strategy execution. Case C makes the most of utilising the tools at their disposal and have no concerns with the tools they use.

Across all the cases, the staff responsible for strategy execution are regarded as highly competent at their job yet there are certain skills gaps. This is evident by the lack of corporate process ownership in Cases A, B and D. Cases A, B and C are experiencing resource constraints yet the staff continue to perform their duties. While Cases A and D are continuing to upskill their staff in search of execution competence. The summary tables across each theme illustrates the differences and similarities in detail. Table 8-16 below highlights the cross-case findings per theme. It contains both similarities and differences.

Table 8-16: Cross-Case Theme Findings

Theme	Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D
External Environment	-Not mentioned as an impact on strategy execution.	-Impacts how the organisation executes its strategy. -This organisation is not proactive in preparing for the impact from the external environment. Hence, no planning is done in this regard. This hampers effective strategy execution.	-Impacts how the organisation executes its strategy. This organisation is proactive in preparing for the impact from the external environment. -No indication that plans are developed to prepare for this.	-Not mentioned as an impact on strategy execution.
Leadership and Governance	-Lack of leadership	-Lack of leadership	-Leadership support is	-Lack of leadership

Theme	Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D
(including Organisational Culture)	<p>support.</p> <p>-Lack of strategic direction in this case even though the parent company provides the guidelines.</p> <p>-Project prioritisation governance is lacking. Political process influences prioritisation in this case.</p> <p>-Lack of project management and strategy execution governance.</p> <p>-Lack of organisational structure realignment. Due to the organisation operating in silos.</p>	<p>support.</p> <p>- Lack of strategic direction in this case even though the parent company provides the guidelines.</p> <p>-Project prioritisation governance is sound. Driven from a parent company perspective.</p> <p>-Prioritisation based on financial benefits.</p> <p>-Lack of project management and strategy execution governance.</p> <p>-Lack of organisational structure realignment due to complacency</p>	<p>evident.</p> <p>-Sound strategic direction.</p> <p>-Project prioritisation governance is well managed. Driven by the CEO.</p> <p>-Prioritisation based on financial criteria.</p> <p>-Good project management and strategy execution governance.</p> <p>-Organisational structure realignment evident.</p> <p>-Lack of culture realignment to strategy execution. The business innovative culture has resulted in the neglect of</p>	<p>support.</p> <p>-Lack of strategic direction. There is no clearly defined business strategy within this case.</p> <p>-Project prioritisation governance is lacking. They have a criteria, but only use the financial metric.</p> <p>-Lack of project management and strategy execution governance.</p> <p>-Lack of organisational structure realignment. Due to the organisation operating in silos.</p> <p>-Lack of culture realignment to</p>

Theme	Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D
	-Lack of culture realignment to strategy execution. Due to work being done based on the good relationship that individuals have with one another.	regarding their market position. -Lack of culture realignment to strategy execution due to a complacency culture that has festered within this case as a result of their market position.	culture realignment to strategy execution.	strategy execution. This is a consequence of the entrepreneurial nature of this organisation.
Communication and Change Management	-Unstructured communication. -Lack of communicating the meaning of the strategy to staff implementing the strategy. -No formal change management interventions. -Training is utilised as a partial form of change	-Structured communication. Formal provision is made for this. -Lack of communicating the meaning of the strategy to staff implementing the strategy. -Formal change management interventions. Organisation is change	-Unstructured communication. -Lack of communicating the meaning of the strategy to staff implementing the strategy. -No formal change management interventions. -Training is utilised as a partial form of change	-Unstructured communication. -Lack of communicating the meaning of the strategy to staff implementing the strategy. -No formal change management interventions.

Theme	Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D
	management.	fatigued.	management.	
Systems and Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Structured project management tools utilised. -Utilisation of the tools is a challenge. -Tools regularly reviewed for relevance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Structured project management tools utilised. -Utilisation of the tools is a challenge. -Tools not proactively reviewed for relevance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Structured project management tools utilised. -No challenge using tools. -Tools not proactively reviewed for relevance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Structured project management tools utilised. -Utilisation of the tools is a challenge. -Tools regularly reviewed for relevance. -Tools are ineffective.
Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Defined processes. -Lack of process ownership. -Project management discipline is applied during strategy formulation and execution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Defined processes. -Lack of process ownership. -Project management discipline is applied during strategy execution and ad hoc manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Defined processes. -Process ownership. -Project management discipline is applied during strategy formulation and execution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Loosely defined processes. -Lack of process ownership. -Project management discipline is applied during strategy execution.

Theme	Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D
Skills and Resourcing	-Have required project management skills. -Investments made in training staff. -Lack of strategy execution skills. -Training investment required for strategy execution skills.	-Project management skills gap. -Lack of strategy execution skills. -Lack of investments made in training staff. -Training investment required for strategy execution skills.	-Have required project management skills. -Lack of strategy execution skills. -Investments made in recruiting the right staff.	-Project management skills gap. -Investments made in training staff. -Lack of strategy execution skills. -Training investment required for strategy execution skills.

8.8.1 Findings in Relation to the System Influence Diagram (SID)

In chapter 2, the project management based strategy execution conceptual framework was developed based on the literature review in that chapter. Now the findings of this study based on the research objectives are discussed in relation to the system influence diagram developed during the cross-case analysis. Below find the framework followed by a description.

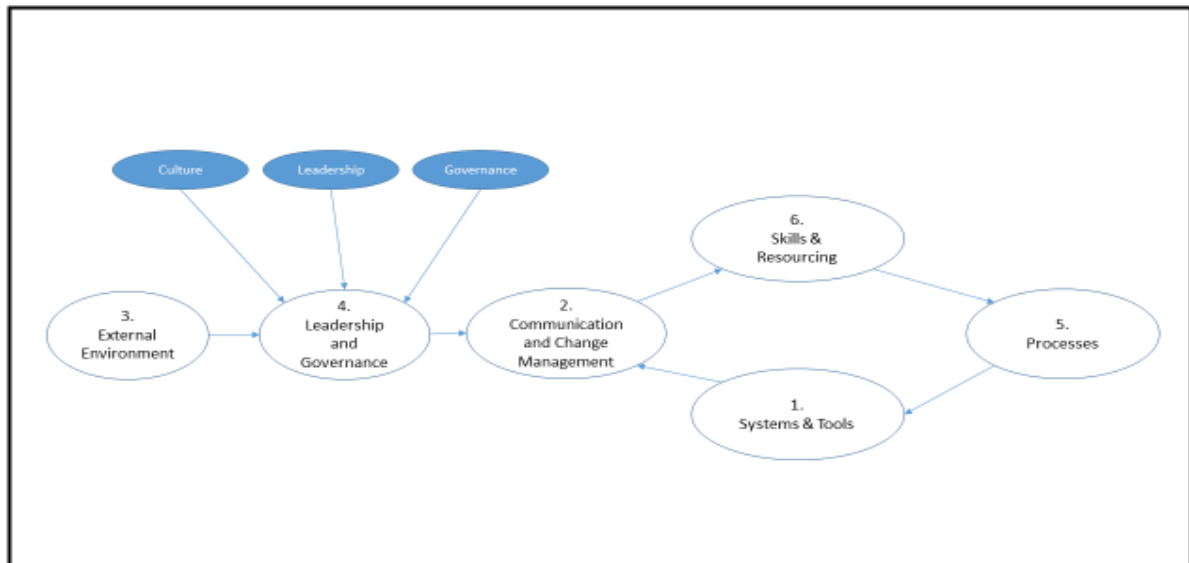


Figure 8-2: System Influence Diagram

The external environment theme emerged as the primary driver during assessing the role of project management during strategy execution utilising the IQA methodology. A primary driver is regarded as a significant influencer within a system as per the IQA. Only Cases B and C alluded to this primary driver being important to effective strategy execution.

The finding that the selection of strategic initiatives or projects is key to successful strategy execution is consistent with the system influence diagram in terms of governance. Once projects have been identified the projects must be selected based on its entire value to the organisation. Not only financial feasibility. Hence, sound governance is required during the prioritisation process. Next, the strategy execution conceptual framework identified the project management discipline as an enabler for strategy execution. The findings indicate that the project management discipline can partially be regarded as an adequate vehicle for strategy execution within this study. Due to the lack of corporate process ownership within Cases A, B and D. In addition to this across all the cases, there is a lack of organisational culture realignment to strategy execution.

The system influence diagram highlights leadership and governance as being key during strategy execution. Hence the above-mentioned findings are inconsistent with the system influence diagram where the leadership and governance theme emerged as the secondary driver as per the IQA methodology applied. In terms of IQA, the secondary driver is caused by the primary driver which in this study is the external environment.

The communication and change management theme is defined as a pivot as per the IQA methodology utilised. Across Cases A, B, C and D communication and change management is ineffective during strategy execution. This is inconsistent with the SID.

Across all the cases, the staff responsible for strategy execution are regarded as highly competent at their job yet there are certain skills gaps. Cases B and D have skills gaps. This is inconsistent with the SID where the skills and resourcing theme is regarded as a pivot. Only Cases A and C are aligned to this as per the SID.

Across Cases A, B and D there is a lack of process ownership during strategy execution. This is inconsistent with the requirements of the system influence diagram that alludes to process ownership being important to ensure effective strategy execution. Processes are regarded as primary outcomes utilising the IQA.

Systems and tools are regarded as primary outcomes utilising the IQA. Cases A, B and D have issues utilising the defined tools. Case C makes the most of utilising the tools at their disposal and have no concerns with the tools they use. All the cases utilise tools during strategy execution even though there are issues with the tools. Hence, this is consistent with the SID outcome.

Lastly, a strategy execution framework is required to ensure that effective strategy execution is achieved. This is aligned to the finding that both formal in house and informal strategy execution methodologies can be utilised if they are adequately governed during strategy execution.

8.9 Conclusion

This chapter presented the cross-case analysis per theme. The individual codes with the relevant quotations per theme were discussed and analysed. Differences and similarities were expressed accordingly per theme. Furthermore, a discussion of the findings was presented. In addition to this, the findings are analysed in relation to the system influence diagram developed during the cross-case focus group session mentioned in section 8.1.

The section that follows discusses the overall findings in relation to the research objectives as defined in chapter 1 of this study. In addition, recommendations are provided for the managerial implications highlighted. The limitations and implications for further research are also discussed in the chapter that follows.

Chapter 9 : Conclusions and Recommendations

9.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the research and explores the pragmatic inferences of the research. In addition to this, it proposes additional research opportunities in this field of study. The findings are presented focussing on the cross-case analysis in pursuit of developing and validating fresh theory. The findings are centred on addressing the research objectives as outlined in chapter 1. For ease of reference, the research objectives are restated below.

The main objective was to investigate the role of project management in the execution of strategy in the telecommunications environment in SA.

The secondary objectives linked to the primary objective were to:

- Identify to what degree the process of the selection of strategic initiatives or projects influences strategy execution.
- Explore project management processes and practices in support of strategy execution.
- Identify the alternative ways of executing strategy within a corporate environment in SA.
- Develop a conceptual framework of the role of project management during strategy execution.

9.2 Conclusions

The conclusions in relation to the primary and secondary research objectives are discussed below.

9.2.1 Primary Research Objective - To investigate the role of project management in the execution of strategy in the telecommunications environment in SA.

A review of the evidence garnered across cases reveals a **disconnect between strategy execution and the utilisation of project management**, indicating that utilising the project management discipline during strategy execution is currently not very effective.

All the cases utilise a project management methodology when applying the project management discipline. They apply the discipline in a dynamic manner. While some organisations follow a formal in house strategy execution methodology, others follow a more informal praxis that, over time, have become an established way of working. The multiple methodology's available to staff when applying the project management discipline during strategy execution causes confusion and uncertainty as to what the appropriate methodology is for the projects being executed. Hence, there is no consistency in applying a methodology and gaining the economies of learning to improve the application of project management during strategy execution.

The project management and strategy execution disciplines are governed independently. Individual departments are responsible for managing strategy execution. A different department decides on what project management methodology to apply for projects to be executed. The dual governance structure leads to a disconnect between strategy execution and the utilisation of project management across the organisation.

There is a **lack of ownership** of the project management and strategy execution disciplines leading to the ineffective application of the project management discipline during strategy execution.

This is evidenced by the general lack of corporate process ownership. Organisations typically have set processes they are supposed to follow but the processes are not being adhered to consistently. In one case there is not even a clearly defined process followed during strategy execution. The discipline of project management in the telecommunications industry is potentially important to the effective execution of strategy. The problem is the manner in which the project management discipline is being applied, which is a contributor to the ineffectiveness of using PM as an enabler in the strategic management process.

These conclusions contribute to the limited literature regarding the role of project management during strategy execution. It contributes to the strategy execution discipline by identifying that project management has not been consistently applied as an enabler for strategy execution in the SA telecommunications environment.

9.2.2 Secondary Research Objective 1 - Identify to what degree the process of the selection of strategic initiatives or projects influences strategy execution.

Projects are **selected based on financial feasibility**. Organisations are not considering the entire strategic value of projects to the organisation when selecting projects or initiatives, but focus purely on the financial feasibility of projects.

While theory suggests that organisations should prioritise projects or initiatives based on the holistic strategic value to the organisation. Across the cases there is inadequate project or initiative prioritisation processes and governance. Within all the cases, there are formal project selection criteria that must be followed. Even though there are project selection criteria in place

across the cases, the prioritisation of projects is mainly based on financial viability. Sound project or strategic initiative selection is required to ensure strategic value adding projects are selected for an organisation.

Framing contests unfolds to determine project prioritisation to the detriment of the organisation. Project selection is very often influenced by power and politics rather than rationality and cognition. Project owners or sponsors that are perceived to be aligned to the key decision makers are more likely to have their projects moved up the priority list for selection and execution.

Due to the above-mentioned political influences, projects that do not offer strategic value to the organisation will be selected ahead of those projects that could potentially offer strategic value. The projects selected because of power and politics could possibly not have the desired effect because of the lack of benefit to the organisation. Therefore, the uncoordinated manner in which projects are selected does influence strategy execution negatively because the total interest of the organisation is not adequately considered. This could result in additional expenditure being incurred or inflated opportunity cost at a later stage because of not factoring in the total strategic value to the organisation.

The manner in which projects or initiatives are selected does influence strategy execution. If the strategic value of the impact of the projects selected to the organisation is not considered and planned for. These projects will not be aligned to the organisations strategic objectives and adversely affect strategy execution. In addition to this projects or initiatives can be selected based on financial feasibility only as indicated within this study. This contributes to the project or initiative selection body of knowledge that indicates the total value that projects or initiatives generate to an organisation must be considered during the selection process.

A framework relating to the role of project management during strategy execution has been developed based on the findings of this study. Below find the framework followed by a description.

9.2.3 Secondary Research Objective 2 - Explore project management processes and practices in support of strategy execution.

A number of **different project management processes** and **practices** are utilised during strategy execution. Across the cases, participants apply different project management processes and practices during strategy execution. They are applied in a fit for purpose manner. Depending on the type of project and the strategic value of projects, a different process or practice is utilised during strategy execution throughout the cases.

Communication of how, when and why the different **project management processes** and **practices** are utilised for the different situations as well as the **impact** of the changes is **not effective**. Across the cases, the organisational architecture realignment in pursuit of strategy execution is an area of concern. This is because the effect of the envisaged changes of the strategy being executed is not effectively communicated throughout the organisations hence these changes are not planned for effectively. Therefore, there is a need for proactive and effective communication for organisational architecture realignment for the dynamic or agile utilisation of processes and practices during strategy execution.

There are **limited formal change management interventions** to effect changes because of projects. Employees are change fatigued due to the numerous changes that happen within the company hence additional change management activities are not performed effectively. Change management is crucial to strategy execution as discussed in the literature review. Amidst the cases there is a lack of effective communication and change management of the implication of the strategy to those responsible for implementation of the strategy.

The **impact** of the **external environment on strategy execution** is **not consistently considered and planned for**.

Awareness of the threats and opportunities posed by the external environment to effective strategy execution was evident. Participants regarded the external environment factors as a threat to the organisation not achieving their strategic objectives. Furthermore, participants also viewed these threats as an opportunity for the organisation to thrive because of these external environment factors. However, no proactive plans were found to be in place to mitigate the threats to effective strategy execution posed by the external environment. Sound plans to grasp opportunities presented by the external environment could also not be explained.

9.2.4 Secondary Research Objective 3 - Identify the alternative ways of executing strategy within a corporate environment in SA.

Within this study, an **informal strategy execution methodology seems to be generally applied.**

Even though formal in-house methodologies are defined if the informal praxis is well managed during strategy execution, the informal methodology can be utilised to execute the organisational strategy. Informal strategy execution methodologies require sound governance for effectiveness as this will assist them to stay in tune with performance and take corrective measures when required.

This conclusion indicates that the project management discipline can be applied to informal praxis during strategy execution as illustrated by the cases within this study. Some literature recommends that frameworks should be utilised during strategy execution. Hence, this finding contributes to this body of knowledge by adding the utilisation of project management during informal strategy execution praxis. Thereby supporting the primary objective that the project management discipline can be applied during strategy execution.

9.2.5 Secondary Research Objective 4 - Develop a conceptual framework of the role of project management during strategy execution.

A project management based strategy execution framework will aid effective strategy execution.

A project management based strategy execution conceptual framework was developed based on the literature review as discussed in (§2.8). This framework is included below for ease of reference. Thereafter the revised conceptual framework is illustrated and discussed based on the findings of the study. The changes are illustrated and explained.

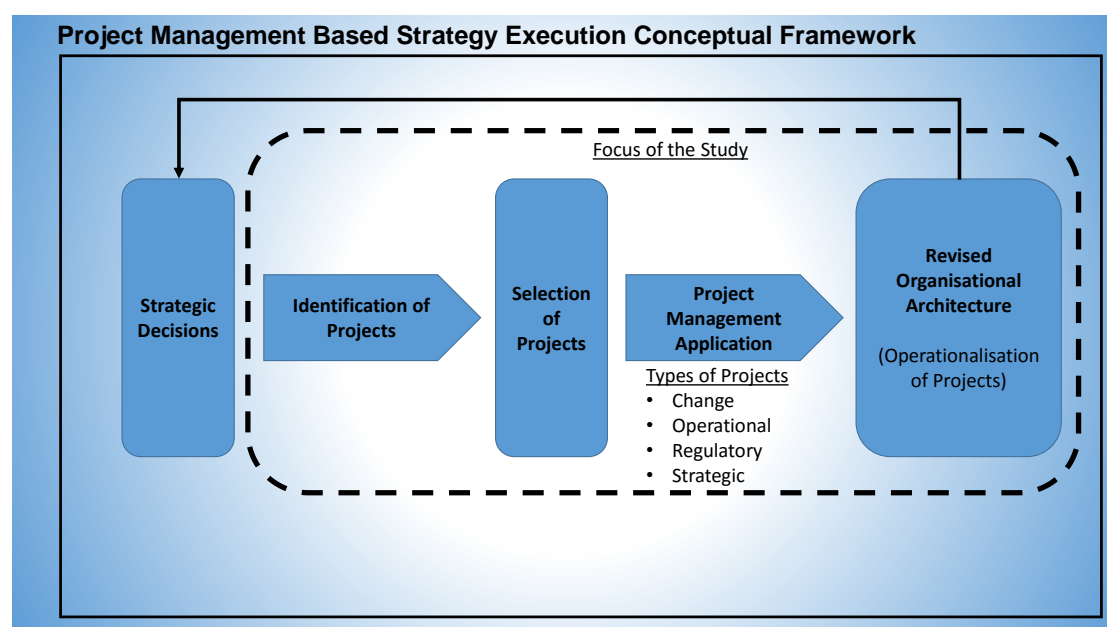


Figure 9-1: Project Management Based Strategy Execution Conceptual Framework

Below find, the description of the changes to the revised project management based strategy execution conceptual framework, a table summarising the conclusions with its impact on the conceptual framework and the figure illustrating the changes.

There are generally more opportunities for strategic projects than resources available. For that reason, the selection of the potentially most effective

strategic initiatives or projects is key to successful strategy execution. Once projects have been identified the strategy execution framework indicates that projects must be selected based on its entire strategic value to the organisation, which of course includes financial feasibility. The selection of projects activity highlighted in grey and labelled **A** within the framework indicates this. This change is based on the conclusion of secondary objective 1 as discussed in (§ 9.2.2) above.

Next, the strategy execution conceptual framework identified the project management discipline as an enabler for strategy execution. The findings indicate that the project management discipline can be regarded as a vehicle for strategy execution within this study, despite the problems observed in its application. The activity highlighted in red and labelled **E** within the strategy execution framework indicates that corporate process ownership and governance is required to ensure the successful utilisation of project management during strategy execution. The above-mentioned corporate process ownership and governance must be managed in a centralised manner. This change to the conceptual framework is because of the conclusions of the primary objective as discussed in (§ 9.2.1).

The conclusion that organisational architecture is not realigned as a result of ineffective communication of the impact of projects or initiatives is inconsistent with the project management based strategy execution conceptual framework. Therefore, the activity highlighted in grey labelled **C** within the framework indicates the realignment of key organisational architecture components based on the changes because of the projects being executed. Once these have been effected, the revised organisational architecture activity highlighted in grey labelled **D** within the framework shows that the operationalisation of projects after completion leads to changes in the organisational architecture. Thereafter the changes are communicated to provide feedback to the strategic decision makers of the organisation and the process is repeated as required. This change to the conceptual framework is as per the conclusions of secondary objective 2 as discussed in (§ 9.2.3) above.

The realignment must be effected to ensure successful strategy execution. In order to ensure the effectiveness of the activities labelled **A**, **B**, **C** and **D** within the revised project management based strategy execution framework. The activity labelled **E** and highlighted in red indicates the importance of centralised corporate process ownership and sound governance to the project management based strategy execution framework that will benefit effective strategy execution.

A strategy execution framework is required to ensure that effective strategy execution is achieved. This is aligned to the conclusion of secondary objective 3 see (§ 9.2.4) that informal strategy execution methodologies can be utilised provided that they are adequately governed during strategy execution. Table 9-1 below summarises the conclusions and how this changed the project management based strategy execution conceptual framework.

Table 9-1: Conclusions and Conceptual Framework Impact

Number	Conclusion	Impact on Conceptual Framework
1	There is disconnect between project management and strategy execution when utilising it during execution. Indicating that applying project management during strategy execution is not very effective.	The activity labelled E and highlighted in red has been added to the framework, indicating the need for unified governance and corporate process ownership across both disciplines to ensure effective strategy execution.
2	There is a lack of ownership of the project management and strategy execution disciplines.	
3	Projects are selected based on financial feasibility. This results in not considering the entire strategic value of projects.	Projects must be selected based on its entire strategic value to the organisation, which includes financial feasibility. The selection of projects activity highlighted in grey and labelled A within the framework indicates this change to the framework.
4	Framing contests unfolds to determine project prioritisation to the detriment of the organisation.	

Number	Conclusion	Impact on Conceptual Framework
5	A number of different project management processes and practices are utilised during strategy execution.	The activity highlighted in grey and labelled C within the framework indicates the realignment of key organisational architecture components based on the changes because of the projects being executed.
6	Communication of how, when and why the different project management processes and practices are utilised for the different situations as well as the impact of the changes is not effective.	
7	The impact of the external environment on strategy execution is not consistently considered and planned for, to ensure effective strategy execution.	The activity highlighted in grey labelled D within the framework shows that the operationalisation of projects after completion leads to changes in the organisational architecture. Thereafter the changes are communicated to provide feedback to the strategic decision makers of the organisation and the process is repeated as required.
8	Within this study, an informal strategy execution methodology is applied during strategy execution.	The activity labelled E and highlighted in red has been added to the framework, indicating the need for unified governance and corporate process ownership across both disciplines to ensure effective strategy execution when utilising an informal strategy execution framework.
9	A project management based strategy execution framework is required for effective strategy execution.	Figure 9.2 illustrated above is the project management based strategy execution conceptual model framework developed for effective strategy execution.

The conclusions illustrated in the above-mentioned Table 9-1, contributes to the strategy execution and project management bodies of knowledge by providing a project management based strategy execution framework for effective strategy execution. It indicates that the project management discipline can be applied during strategy execution, if unified sound governance and corporate process ownership is exercised. Below find the revised Project Management Based Strategy Execution Conceptual Framework.

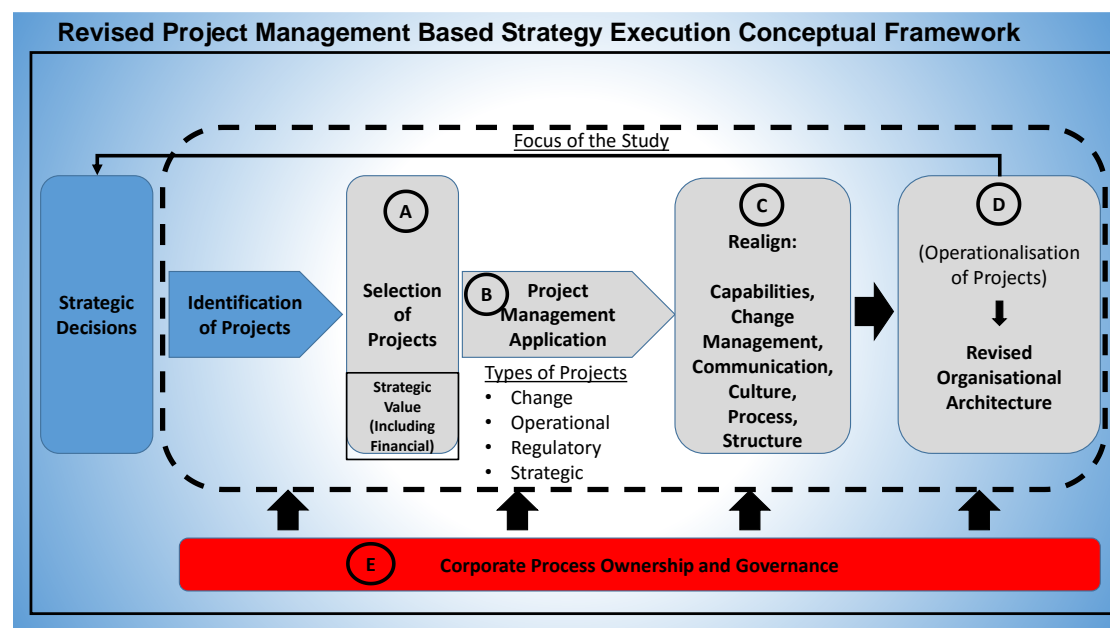


Figure 9-2: Revised Project Management Based Strategy Execution Conceptual Framework

The conclusion is that the manner in which projects or initiatives are selected does influence strategy execution. In addition to this projects or initiatives can be selected based on financial feasibility only as indicated within this study. This contributes to the project or initiative selection body of knowledge that indicates the total value that projects or initiatives generate to an organisation must be considered during the selection process.

9.3 Managerial Recommendations

The conclusions of the study have direct implications for strategy practitioners when executing strategy.

There is limited benefit in designing an enablement approach and framework and not being aware of how this must be enforced to ensure effectiveness during strategy execution. Investments have been made across all the cases regarding the project management discipline skills, tools and training. Yet the findings indicate that there is partial benefit in utilising project management during strategy execution. Sound centralised project management and strategy execution governance is required to ensure effective strategy execution. Therefore, organisations should constitute a strategy execution office responsible for managing strategy execution and strategy execution projects. The strategy execution office should also be responsible for determining the methodology's standards utilised relating to the project management and strategy execution disciplines.

The selection of projects is based on financial feasibility and has an influence on the manner in which the strategy is executed. Organisations should not dismiss projects that are only based on financial viability. They should define an approach of dealing with these types of projects to the benefit of the organisation. Constituting a strategy execution framework managed by the strategy execution office would be an advisable way to address this. This can be utilised to ensure sound centralised project or initiative prioritisation governance. Specific project management and strategy execution key performance indicators must be developed to ensure effective management of the strategy execution framework as expressed above.

The impact of projects executed on organisational architecture components such as capabilities, change management, communication, culture, process and structure must be regularly reviewed and realigned for the strategy to be executed effectively. The envisaged changes must be identified, planned for, accountability assigned, monitored regularly and performance managed for execution.

Enterprise wide training of the project management and strategy execution practices must be regularly conducted by organisations. Formal training

sessions should be scheduled to communicate when changes to these practices occur and the purpose of these changes.

Strategy practitioners must identify and own the strategy execution methodology be it formal or an in house methodology that is utilised to execute the strategy. Corporate process ownership is pivotal and directly linked to the manner in which governance is officiated during the application of the methodology during strategy execution. Ensuring that project management and strategy execution processes are followed is key to effective strategy execution.

9.4 Recommendations for Further Research

The project management discipline was found to only contribute partially to strategy execution within this study. A longitudinal study could provide further evidence in the generalisability of this study.

Further research with regard to what degree the process of the selection of strategic initiatives or projects influences strategy execution is advised in order to obtain financial data into the influence of the selection, projects, or initiatives on strategy execution. This will provide researchers a better understanding of the return on investments for projects undertaken and the effectiveness of the project management functions when executing strategy.

The degree to which the project management maturity influences the application of the project management discipline during strategy execution needs investigation. This is because the research focused on the role of project management during strategy execution and not the project management maturity aspect.

The strategy as practice discipline refers to the strategising of strategy as praxis as well strategy practices and does not indicate what must be utilised to execute the strategy. In addition to this, the strategy as practice literature has revealed no evidence of success regarding their approach to strategy

execution. Therefore, further research is recommended to determine if project management can be utilised as a strategy practice during strategy execution.

Because senior management within the cases are accountable for strategy execution, these were specifically sampled to be interviewed. The element of the leadership influence on strategy execution was not raised as an issue. Research into the role of leadership during strategy execution when utilising project management will add to the strategy execution body of knowledge.

9.5 Limitations

This research is a cross sectional study at a particular point in time and not a longitudinal study over an extended period. The study does not have extensive cause and effect, behaviour and additional informational characteristics for informed theory building over an extended period as with a longitudinal study.

The study has been conducted across four cases within a specific industry. An extensive sample across different industries would have allowed for better generalisability.

A secondary objective was to understand to what degree the process of the selection of strategic initiatives or projects influences strategy execution. A limitation with this objective was that no data was provided or obtained from documents perused as to the amount of funds invested in the projects executed in relation to the return on investment the organisation has received for those projects.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Case Interview Guide

Below find the case interview guide utilised.

Date: _____

Company: _____

Interviewee Name: _____

Designation: _____

Section	Objective	Discussion Length
A. Introduction	Introduce the research and establish rapport with the interviewee.	5 minutes
B. Exploring the role of project management during strategy execution	Determine the role of project management during strategy execution.	50 minutes
C. Closing	Allow the researcher to share additional information and advise if other persons should be interviewed within the organisation.	5 minutes

A. Introduction

Familiarise the interviewee with the nature and objectives of the study as well as the importance of confidentiality to be maintained with information received during this interview and this research study in general.

Company Background

1. Please tell me about your position and your role within your organisation.

2. Please describe your work experience and qualifications.
3. Would you please describe the nature of your business and the industry you operate in?

B. Exploring the role of project management during strategy execution

4. What particular process or methodology is being followed to execute your strategy?
5. What tools and techniques do you currently utilise to execute your strategy? E.g. project management.
6. What project management discipline is being utilised within your organisation?
7. How is the project management discipline being utilised within your end to end strategic management process?
8. How is the project management discipline being utilised to execute your strategy?
9. What is the level of maturity regarding the project management discipline being utilised?
10. What is the level of maturity regarding the tools and techniques being utilised?
11. How is the appropriateness of the discipline as well as the tools and techniques being utilised to execute your strategy assessed?
12. What are the challenges or issues you have with the tools and techniques being applied?
13. What type of investment has your organisation made regarding the project management discipline?

14. What type of project management governance do you have in place?
15. Where is the project management office (PMO) placed within the organisation?
16. Where is the project management centre of excellence placed within your organisation?
17. What is your project or initiative selection approach?
18. How does the process of the selection of strategic initiatives or projects influence strategy execution?
19. What role does organisational architecture play in strategy execution?
20. How are projects operationalised once completed?
21. What about the staff executing the strategy? Do you believe they have the appropriate skills?
22. Which department is responsible for strategy execution?
23. How is strategy execution governed?
24. What role does change management play when executing your strategy?
25. In your mind what would be integral to successful strategy execution within your organisation?
26. From an industry perspective what are the threats to successful strategy execution in your mind?

C. Closing

27. Are there any additional or other persons within your organisation you think I should be interviewing?

28. Are there any other questions that you think I should be asking you?

29. Are there any public documents you suggest I review in order to gain a better understanding of strategy execution within your organisation?

Appendix 2: Research Interview Schedule

Below find the research interview schedule for the participants interviewed.

Case	Date	Designation	Comments
A	17/11/2016	Senior Project Manager	Only 1 interview needed.
A	17/11/2016	Senior Project Manager	Only 1 interview needed.
A	17/11/2016	Senior Project Manager	Only 1 interview needed.
A	17/11/2016	Senior Project Manager	Only 1 interview needed.
B	6/12/2016	Head: Strategy Research	Only 1 interview needed.
B	13/01/2017	Head: Strategy	Only 1 interview needed.
B	10/03/2017	Head: Strategy Development & Research	Only 1 interview needed.
B	29/03/2017	Senior Manager: Mergers & Acquisitions	Only 1 interview needed.
C	10/03/2017	Executive: Strategy & Business Planning	Only 1 interview needed.
C	10/03/2017	Executive: Strategy Business Operations	Only 1 interview needed.
C	11/04/2017	Executive Head: Programme Management	Only 1 interview needed.
C	17/05/2017	Chief Information Officer	Only 1 interview needed.
D	17/01/2017	Group Chief Information Officer	Only 1 interview needed.
D	07/08/2017	Executive: Product Management	Only 1 interview needed.
D	17/08/2017	Chief Operating Officer	Only 1 interview needed.

Appendix 3: Case Analysis Meeting Form

Below find the case analysis meeting form used by the researcher.

Case Number: _____ **Date:** _____

Interviewee Name: _____

1. Main themes, impressions and summary statements about what is unfolding in the case and at the site.

2. Explanations, speculations, propositions and assertions about what is happening in the case.

3. Contrasting interpretations, explanations and disagreements about what is transpiring with the case.

4. Next steps for data collection, follow up questions, specific actions, general directions fieldwork should take.

5. Implications for revision and updating of coding.

Appendix 4: Document List

Below find a consolidated list of company documents reviewed.

Case	Date Obtained	Document Name	Description
A	17/11/2016	Combined Report 2015/2016	The report provides a detailed account to the stakeholders of its controls, strategy, and organisational performance for the financial year. Furthermore, it also provides a business outlook for the future.
A	17/11/2016	Combined Report 2014/2015	The report provides a detailed account to the stakeholders of its controls, strategy, and organisational performance for the financial year. Furthermore, it also provides a business outlook for the future.
B	06/12/2016	Combined Report 2015/2016	The report provides a detailed account to the stakeholders of its controls, strategy, and organisational performance for the financial year. Furthermore, it also provides a business outlook for the future.
B	06/12/2016	Combined Report 2014/2015	The report provides a detailed account to the stakeholders of its controls, strategy, and organisational performance for the financial year. Furthermore, it also provides a business outlook for the future.
C	10/03/2017	Combined Report 2015/2016	The report provides a detailed account to the stakeholders of its controls, strategy, organisational performance for the financial year. Furthermore, it also provides a business outlook for the future.
C	10/03/2017	2015/2016 Corporate Control Report	This report communicates the organisations approach to corporate governance. It highlights the structures in place to manage corporate governance.
D	17/01/2017	Annual Financial Report 2015/2016	The report provides a detailed account to the stakeholders of its controls, strategy, and organisational performance for the financial year. Furthermore, it also provides a business outlook for the future.
D	17/01/2017	Annual	The report provides a detailed account to the

		Financial Report 2016/2017	stakeholders of its controls, strategy, and organisational performance for the financial year. Furthermore, it also provides a business outlook for the future.
D	17/01/2017	Prioritisation Matrix	This document contains the prioritisation criteria for projects or initiatives that is utilised to determine its importance.

Appendix 5: Rules of Engagement

- All the information received will be treated as strictly confidential
- The researcher will sign a non-disclosure of information agreement with the organisations
- The researcher will be interviewing participants within the organisation
- Should additional or follow up interviews be required the researcher would request permission to conduct these and schedule this in advance
- Interviews will take approximately 90 minutes
- Should participants have questions at any time please feel free to ask them
- The researcher will be electronically recording the interview as well as taking notes where required
- Electronically recorded information will be transcribed for data analysis purposes
- Post the interview if there are any questions please contact the researcher on 0832006517 or via email on claud.burgers@hotmail.co.za
- The findings will be utilised for academic purposes only
- Research integrity will be maintained by applying rigour to the qualitative research process through the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of the research information
- Once the research has been concluded the participants will be furnished with a copy of the thesis by the researcher

Appendix 6: Codebook

The compact disc (CD) attachment on the inside of the back cover of this document contains the codebook. The spreadsheet on the CD contains three tabs. They are a list of codes generated and its descriptions. In addition to this it contains the within case analysis and cross-case analysis code groupings.

Appendix 7: Coding Analysis Memorandum

Below find the analysis detail recorded during the coding process.

Date	Description of coding activity
31/01/2017 – 06/02/2017	Case A initial coding.
07/02/2017 – 13/02/2017	Case A secondary coding.
27/05/2017 – 04/04/2017	Case B initial coding.
05/04/2017 – 12/04/2017	Case B secondary coding.
03/06/2017 – 09/06/2017	Case C initial coding.
10/06/2017 – 17/06/2017	Case C secondary coding.
26/08/2017 – 29/08/2017	Case D initial coding.
30/08/2017 – 06/09/2017	Case D secondary coding.
11/09/2017 – 05/10/2017	Within case analysis for all cases completed.
08/11/2017	IQA focus group session held.
13/11/2017 - 30/11/2017	Cross-case Analysis completed.

Appendix 8: Affinity Relationship Table

Below find the affinity relationship table containing all possible options presented to the focus group participants for completion.

Affinity Name	Possible Relationships
1. Systems & tools	$A \rightarrow B$
2. Communication and change	$A \leftarrow B$
3. External environment	$A \diamond B$ (No Relationship)
4. Leadership & governance	
5. Processes	
6. Skills & resourcing	

Affinity Relationship Table	
Affinity Pair Relationships	
1	2
1	3
1	4
1	5
1	6
2	3
2	4
2	5
2	6
3	4
3	5
3	6
4	5
4	6
5	6

Appendix 9: Tabular Affinity Interrelationship Diagram

Below find the affinity names, tabular affinity interrelationship diagrams, SID assignments and the definitions of the SID assignments.

Affinity Name	
1.	Systems & tools
2.	Communication and Change
3.	External Environment
4.	Leadership & Governance
5.	Processes
6.	Skills & Resourcing

Tabular IRD									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	OUT	IN	Δ
1		^	<	<	<	<	1	4	-3
2	<		<	<	^	^	2	3	-1
3	^	^		^	^	^	5	0	5
4	^	^	<		^	^	4	1	3
5	^	<	<	<		<	1	4	-3
6	^	<	<	<	^		2	3	-1

Count the number of up arrows (\uparrow) or *Outs*

Count the number of left arrows (\leftarrow) or *Ins*

Subtract the number of *Ins* from the *Outs* to determine the (Δ) *Deltas*

$$\Delta = \text{Out} - \text{In}$$

Tabular IRD – Sorted in Descending Order of Δ									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	OUT	IN	Δ
3	^	^		^	^	^	5	0	5
4	^	^	<		^	^	4	1	3
2	<		<	<	^	^	2	3	-1
6	^	<	<	<	^		2	3	-1
1		^	<	<	<	<	1	4	-3
5	^	<	<	<		<	1	4	-3

SID Assignments	
3	PD - Primary Driver
4	SD - Secondary Driver
2	PIV - Pivot
6	PIV - Pivot
1	PO - Primary Outcome
5	PO - Primary Outcome

Appendix 10: Quotations per Code

The CD attachment on the inside of the back cover of this document contains the list of quotations per code.